State of the ARTS

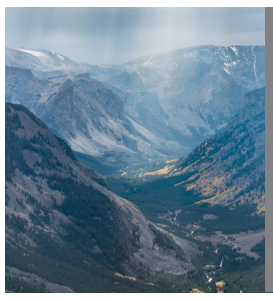
MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL

Fall 2024
October
November
December

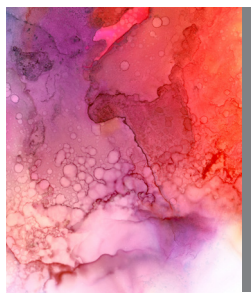
Providing information to all Montanans through funding by the National Endowment for the Arts and the State of Montana

performing arts page 5

literary arts page 8



native arts page 14



visual arts page 19

Artwork by Mary Gayle Shanahan.

2024 Governor's Arts Awards Honorees

The Governor's Arts Awards honor outstanding Montana citizens and organizations...benefit all Montanans, and five new recipients have been named. ***Meet this year's honorees...***

Read more, page 15

Art News Statewide

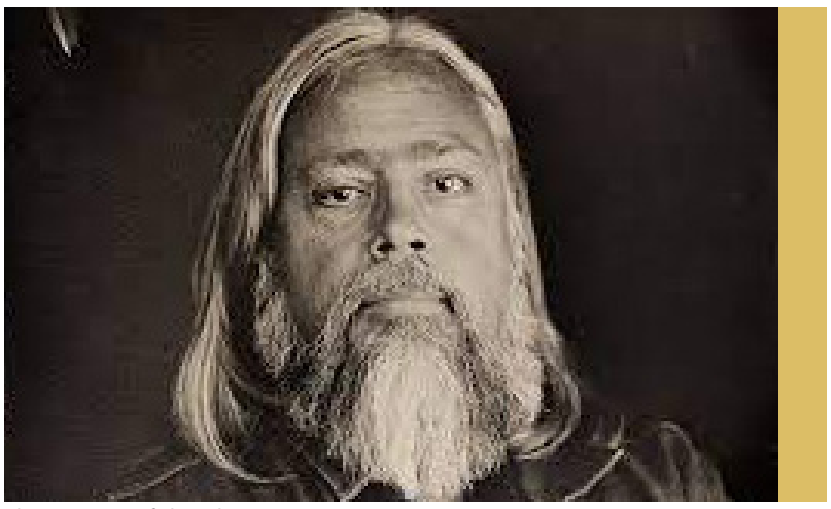


Photo courtesy of Chris Chapman.

Becoming Little Shell: A Landless Indian's Journey

Learn about Montana Poet Laureate Chris La Tray's riveting new memoir. It's the story of a whole people, and it's the story of a man. ***Learn more about Chris' journey...***

Read more, page 14

Wheatfield—An Inspiration. The seed is in the ground. *Photo by Blair Speed.*

Harvest Among the Houses

Over the course of Montana's short summer season, Tinworks Art's campus became a living artwork called *Wheatfield—An Inspiration. The seed is in the ground.* The ideas behind *Wheatfield* found their way inside those buildings too, in the other exhibitions which Tinworks has curated under the collective title *The Lay of the Land*. ***See the yields of this artistic harvest...***

Read more, page 20

Youth Instrument Building. *Photo courtesy of Montana Arts Council.*

Artists in Schools and Communities

Montana professional artists of all disciplines are sharing their knowledge and expertise to the benefit of all arts learners. For teens in the Missoula area, a fresh and highly unique arts education organization takes a multidisciplinary approach to arts learning. ***Check out the Instrument Shop...***

Read more, page 24

from the director

Krys Holmes
Executive Director
krys.holmes@mt.gov

"...when you look at the best of what we're producing, it's clear this art can only be created *here*."

A Fine and Radiant Harvest

I hit the road this summer, crisscrossing my home state to meet people, see art, and learn what I could about the dreams and vexations of Montanans who labor in the fields of art and culture. I came back with a bug-spattered windshield and a renewed sense of Montana's unique "cosmopolitan regionalism," a term I harvested from Rick Newby's *A Regionalism that Travels*, his 50-year retrospective contemplation of arts and culture in Montana.

We're remote from the world's creative centers. Some social-media yahoos even like to moan that we don't have culture here. Yet Montana has generated a long and layered heritage of art informed by global influences yet deeply rooted in our landscape. Our cultural heritage feeds off the forces of the wider world, and reflects a certain cosmopolitan world-view. Yet when you look at the best of what we're producing, it's clear this art can only be created *here*.

Enter stage right: Chris La Tray. Our current poet laureate brings a powerful contemporary voice and a rock n' roll aesthetic to the Little Shell Tribe's resurgence in his "heartbreaking, infuriating, and remarkable" (Foreward Reviews) memoir, *Becoming Little Shell*. Crack the book and out tumble stories and histories and voices from the 1760s to today, from Hudson's Bay to the Front Range. But it lands us right here, mostly on Chris's front porch near Council Grove, where among the chickadees and the swallows a man peers through his personal history into the soul of his people.

Up in Glasgow, in a garage converted into a magical studio, labors painter and ceramic artist Cat McIntyre. A Saskatchewan girl—her father, ceramic artist Bruce Reitler, served for years on the Saskatchewan Crafts Council—Cat produces fearless, delicate works that reflect the contemporary female experience in the ranchlands of the northern prairie. She paints on doors, fabric, walls. She embroiders fierce messages of sisterhood and survival into her canvases. Her creativity is a hunger as voracious as the prairie wind.

Westward to Basin, where jazz trombonist/vocalist MJ Williams has created a lifelong poem-song of exploration and collaboration. A co-founder of the Montana Artist Refuge, a 2016 Governor's Arts Award winner and named 2021 Jazz Hero by the Jazz Journalists Assoc., MJ has crafted an unlikely career (a woman? In jazz? On trombone?) into a transcontinental improvisation of multiple connections. Her compositions explore sound, geography, silence, and the built environment. (I once got to do a musical improvisation with her in the historic beehive kilns at the Archie Bray.) Mostly—like the Montana wind, again—they transport. One reviewer called MJ "a legend, a dream, a syncope, a walking funny bone, a Montana treasure."

A theatre work that underscores Montana's cosmopolitan regionalism is Jay Pyette's *The Harvest*, which has been produced in Havre, Anaconda, Missoula, and next spring in New York. In it, a Montana farming family loses its patriarch and spins out on the black ice of economic impossibilities that follow. It speaks powerfully to this place, this time, to the familiar clutch at fragile traditions, redefining of relationships, the subtle and overt power-dance of women on the Plains—the universal struggle to hold to tradition in a world where everything changes.

I have barely begun to learn about Ben Pease, the Apsáalooke/Northern Cheyenne artist in Billings, who has exhibited internationally and whose paintings radiate "solemn gravitas and fractious energy" (The Guardian). Or Indigenous designers like Carrie Moran McCleary, Rebekah Jarvey, and Della Big Hair, whose works bring ferocious beauty to the worlds of clothing, accessories, and textiles. Their use of traditional techniques and patterns in unexpected new ways signal that our Indigenous women, once made invisible by the norms of the dominant culture, are invisible no more.

As Newby says, this is not a regionalism that rejects the outside world, but one that adds an unduplicable harvest to the world's cultural largesse. Through my bug-smeared windshield I saw it. With thunderheads building over the Absarokas or summer's long shadows stretching over the grassland, I carried it with me. With Philip Aaberg on the music player (who brings more cosmopolitan regionalism to music than Phil? He can summon sunlight on a snowfall, a migrating herd of elk, a trout river in fall, and mix it up with classical, folk, Métis, and jazz riffs to create a sound that is utterly *here*) I drove hundreds of miles home to this artistic heart of Montana.

Just as my car has plenty more miles in it, I could go on about the artists keeping Montana's cosmopolitan regionalism alive today. And hopefully future issues of *State of the Arts* will get to many of them. But I will leave you here, with a book, which is where we started. On the back flap of Allen Morris Jones's poetry volume, *Mumblecusser*, in one of the world's greatest jacket flap bios, Jones lists his shortcomings and then avows, "there is no one, no one else, who might have written these, these, *these*…poems."

Despite all Montana's follies, foibles, and fragilities, this art, this very art, is uniquely our own.

State of the Arts Welcomes Submissions

State of the Arts welcomes submissions of photographs, press releases and newsworthy information from individual artists and arts organizations.

Next deadline:

The deadline for submissions is November 15 for the Winter issue (January-March).

Please check with the Montana Arts Council for reprint permission.

Send items to:

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State of the Arts is available free of charge upon request as a public service of the Montana Arts Council.

Announcements...

Great Falls C.M. Russell Museum Welcomes New Director

Earlier this year the C.M. Russell Museum in Great Falls named Chris Warden as its new executive director. Chris, a Great Falls native, previously worked for two decades as vice president of technology at the Washington Companies in Missoula, and has previously served on the C.M. Russell board of directors, as well as those of the Foundation for Montana History, Leadership Montana, and others. Chris is a graduate of C.M. Russell High School and the University of Montana. In an interview with KRTV News, Chris spoke about his new role: "Becoming the Executive Director of the Russell Museum marks a return home for me, almost full circle in life," Warden said. "To come back to a community I love and get to lead an institution that I cherish."

Help us welcome Chris Warden to the helm of one of Montana's most cherished cultural institution, and learn more about the museum at www.cmrussell.org

Elk River Arts and Lectures Director Steps Down

Amy Zanoni, Ph.D., executive director of Elk River Arts and Lectures, has announced her departure from the Livingston-based writing collective. Amy is leaving to resume work on the history writing project she began as a doctoral student, with the goal of having it become a published book. This move is prompted by Amy receiving an American Council of Learned Societies fellowship. These fellowships support scholars poised to make original and significant contributions to knowledge in any field of the humanities or interpretive social sciences.

"It has been a complete honor to collaborate with so many of you over the years to nurture and expand Park County's literary legacy, and to do work that I believe in—and that the community believes in—so fully."

Amy has been working diligently with Elk River's board of trustees in the process of seeking a new director to continue its programming and community outreach ahead of her December 1 departure. We'd like to wish her the best as she pursues the research and writing of her new work, and we're looking forward to the work of Elk River's next executive director.

Meet the Montana Arts Council's New Chair, Steve Zabel

We're pleased to introduce you to the Montana Arts Council's new chair, Steve Zabel. Appointed to the Council by Governor Greg Gianforte in 2021, Steve has brought his expertise as a western art authority and businessman to our work. Steve is the founder of Montana Trails Gallery in Bozeman, which for more than thirty years has shown and represented many of the west's most prominent visual artists including Clyde Aspevig, Tom Gilleon, Andy Thomas, Martin Grelle, William Acheff, Oleg Stavrowsky, and others. Steve also collects and advises on manuscripts and artifacts relating to western and Montana history, and his expertise is valued among scholars and art collectors alike.

Steve grew up on a ranch in the Madison Valley and began his art career by publishing prints of work by his father, Larry Zabel, the respected western wildlife painter. Since founding Montana Trails Gallery, Steve has operated it from several locations on Bozeman's Main Street and the gallery has long been a mainstay of Montana's western art scene, earning a reputation for its strong historic collections which include work by Charles M. Russell, Frederic Remington, Joseph Henry Sharp, and others.

We're thrilled to have Steve Zabel's expertise and leadership as he takes the Montana Arts Council's gavel, which he inherits from former chair and Billings attorney Greg Murphy. Please join us in welcoming Steve to the post, and in saying thank-you to Greg for several years of diligent, dedicated service.

MONTANA PERFORMING Arts consortium

Membership News

If you're a practitioner of the performing arts but don't belong to the Montana Performing Arts Consortium (MPAC), you should! MPAC promotes touring performing artists and the presenters who host them, and it's recently restructured membership fees and registration for its annual showcase and conference to make the organization more inclusive and accessible and to provide more member benefits. These include MPAC's member directory, performance calendars, booking alerts, grant and funding opportunity notifications, showcase archives, and admittance to the annual conference and showcase—a unique chance for artists and presenters to meet, experience performances in person, and learn about new opportunities.

To become a member of MPAC, or to learn about benefits you already receive as a member, **visit www.mtperformingarts.org/membership.**

In Memory of...

Helen Elliott

1928–2024

Helen Hales Elliott passed away Friday, September 13th after a short illness, surrounded by family. Helen was born in 1928 to Lura and Orville Hales, and she lived nearly her entire life in Conrad, most of it in the house that was her mother's. After her father tragically died when she was 9 years old, she grew up quickly, graduating from Conrad High School in only 3 years as salutatorian.

Helen was a strong-willed and good-hearted woman, years ahead of her time. At the young age of 16, she began college at the University of Minnesota, transferring to University of Montana when the former was hit by a polio outbreak. She also attended summer sessions at various other universities, including the University of California at Berkeley. She was a proud member of Alpha Chi Omega and eventually became president of her chapter.

During her time at U of Montana, Helen also found the love of her life and future husband, fellow Conrad native Everett Elliott. She chose to withdraw from college to care for her ailing mother, who unfortunately succumbed to breast cancer when Helen was 21. Helen and Everett married later that year, in December of 1949, and shortly after their honeymoon she completed her bachelor's degree in Music Education from U of M; she remained a lifelong Grizzlies fan. She proudly served several terms on the U of M Alumni Board!

Helen and Everett then spent their early years working at the Conrad Creamery and Dry Fork Ranch that Helen inherited, and Helen continued to be involved in farming that land right up until her passing. She also allowed a portion of the farmland to be used for the Lions Club annual Whoop-Up Rodeo – a site which is now known as the Helen Elliott Arena. In 2007, she was honored as the Whoop-Up Grand Marshal.

Helen pursued an elementary teaching certificate at the University of Great Falls, where she also took flying lessons. She then taught music in the Conrad school system and in private piano and voice lessons, inspiring thousands of people in their talent and love of music. If you are from the area, there is a good chance you or someone you know took music lessons from Helen.

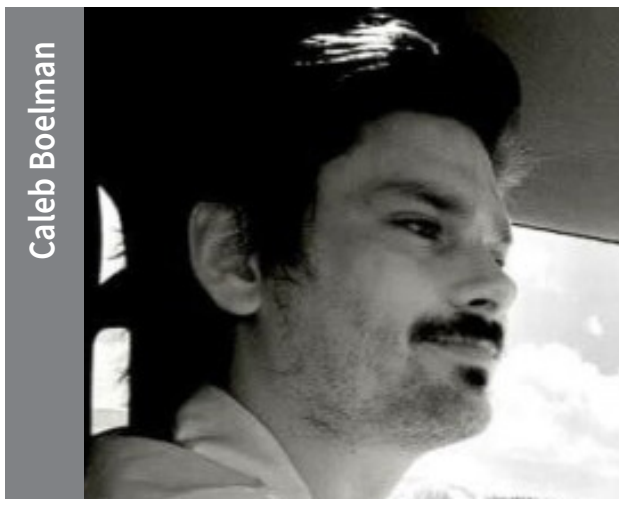
Helen was also quite possibly the longest-serving church choir director in the country. She began directing the church choir at the First Presbyterian Church of Conrad at age 21 and continued as its director for a full 64 years – an amazing feat! She loved her church dearly and developed the choir to its full potential.

Helen was devoted to her family, her church, her music students, the Orpheum, and the town of Conrad, which she continuously sought to bolster and improve over her lifetime. She served as the Civil Defense Director of Conrad and the Disaster & Emergency Services Coordinator of Pondera County for a total of 19 years, dealing with a variety of emergencies during her tenure. As part of this role, she held a national leadership position and thoroughly enjoyed meeting people from across the country while attending national conferences. Perhaps influenced by these experiences, Helen decided that the town of Conrad would benefit from an NPR station, so she worked tirelessly to convince the FCC to bring NPR to the Conrad area in the form of K217FH, now known as Yellowstone Public Radio.

The next challenge that Helen chose to tackle was a formidable one: the Orpheum Theatre in Conrad, which had been closed for many years. Seeing its potential, she argued that it should be renovated and turned into an event space for performers, so she founded the Pondera Arts Council to help make this goal a reality. Through the help of local donations, various grants, and a lot of hard work, the Council was able to fully renovate the theatre and reopen it, providing the town of Conrad with a venue for both movies and live performances, including a yearly concert schedule. In recognition of her contributions, Helen received the Unsung Hero Award in Conrad and the Silver Spur Award in the Conrad-Shelby area.

Helen was preceded in death by her husband Everett, and she is survived by three children and their spouses (Dan & Linda, Lura & Steve, and Steve & Marcia) as well as seven grand-children (Austin, Lindan, Alex, Megan, Max, Ryan, and Taylor) and seven great grand-children (Ella, Theo, Lorraine, Eliza, Mae, Jack, and Everett). She will be missed greatly. A private burial service will be held, with a Celebration of Life to follow in April of 2025. Donations should be directed to the First Presbyterian Church of Conrad and also the Orpheum Theatre of Conrad. When you hear music, think of Helen.

https://www.asperfh.com/obituaries/helen-elliott



Caleb Boelman

1992–2024

Caleb Bruce Boelman, 32, passed away at his home in Butte, late Saturday night, August 10, 2024. He left behind an ocean of loved ones—his husband—Doug Ingraham and the two boys they fostered, his parents—Tom and Meg, four siblings—John, Jacob, Hannah, and Esther, "adopted brother" (AKA Best Friend) Cooper Meyers, a grandmother—Shirley Boelman, two aunts—Cindy Biggerstaff and Judy Boelman, his uncle Gordy Boelman, Doug's parent's—Bruce and Cindy Ingraham, Doug's brother and sister-in-law Marc & Ashley, his niece and nephew—Milee and Jax Ingraham, as well as his chosen nephews Triston, Justin and Austen, multiple cousins, friends he had from childhood, friends he made as an adult, and life long friends he made just the week before. That was Caleb.

During his time in Butte, Caleb cultivated a variety of relationships and grew his chosen family. Douglas, Schylar Baber, Ezerae Coates, Ashley Tracy, Anthony Hughes, Brian Flikkema, all the Belisario's and so very many more enjoyed his light. He brightened the world at Taco Del Sol, Pita Pit, and his outreach work with the Butte-Silver Bow Health Department. In Missoula he went to school at the University of Montana, worked at Bernice's Bakery, became the president of LAMDA, worked with developmentally disabled adults through ORI, and supported the LGTBQ+ Community Center.

During a short stint in Washington DC, Caleb built a family with Freddy's (which was always a source for good memories and fun stories) and worked at Founding Farmers Fishers and Bakers. He loved the exposure to the art, culture, and politics of Washington which carried over to a love for travel, but he couldn't stay away from home for long.

Caleb truly bloomed when he returned to Montana and for the next six years he became very familiar with the road between Butte and Missoula. He returned to the U of M and in 2022 became an assistant events manager at the Montana Museum of Art and Culture after working as a facilities assistant for the Missoula Children's Theatre, an organization he had been part of for over 10 years. He planned to graduate in May of 2025 with a BA in Theatre and a focus in Arts Management. In Butte Caleb was beginning to build a relationship with the Orphan Girl Theatre, volunteered through the local Kiwanis Club, and assisted Ingraham Environmental as need arose. Meanwhile, Doug and Caleb grew and found a peace in each other that was calming and invigorating at the same time. They married on New Year's Eve 2023.

Though Caleb always considered Missoula his home, his travels to Butte and the home he built with Doug over a 10 years period became a sanctuary. He loved painting the mountains out the window from the apartment while the dogs and the cats played around the house. Before having to take more time with Doug's health, Doug and Caleb were foster parents to two amazing young boys. If Caleb treated his cocker spaniels, golden retrievers and kittens like children, you can only imagine how close he held those two boys in his heart.

Caleb's last weeks were spent doing exactly what he loved—serving as a camp counselor for MCT's Performing Arts Camp up at Flathead Lake. He could not have been prouder of the children, the other camp counselors (many of whom had been campers at previous camps), and the program itself. His growing wish was to bring that same energy to Butte and make a production of his own while helping the OGT.

Caleb and Doug did not have nearly enough time with their Butte, Missoula, and Miles City families or to enjoy their pets, video games, trips to Disney, Broadway, Chicago, or any of the hundreds of other adventures they dreamed of taking. Yet always, in the adventures they have had sharing the good times with people made them better. Regardless of how short their marriage was, Doug and Caleb found a strength in each other and their families that was unrivaled.

A Celebration of Life service was held at the University of Montana in the Montana Theatre on Sunday, August 25, 2024. In lieu of flowers the family requests you donate to The Orphan Girl Theatre in Butte or a PAC scholarship fund in Caleb's name at Missoula Children's Theatre.

Doug would like to share a special thank you for the Belisario's, for their lifelong friendship, and for their comfort on the night of Caleb's passing. The Ingraham and Boelman families would also like to thank our communities and Caleb's friends for their incredible outpouring of love and support.

https://www.gardencityfh.com/obituaries/caleb-boelman

Performing Arts

Film

Accomplished photographer, performer, and filmmaker Mary Kate Teske.
Photo courtesy of Mary Kate Teske.

Building a Car. And a Film

By Eric Heidle

Filmmaking's a collaborative process. Whether it's cranked out by hand or in assembly-line fashion, making a film involves countless moving parts meshing perfectly, a crew of talented creators who bring unique skills to the project, and assembling the whole thing so that, in the end, it roars to life when you turn the key.

It's the same with building a car, even if you're only rebuilding it. Just ask Mary Kate Teske, a filmmaker from Billings who's currently working to secure financing for a feature film about a car with quite a back story—and a story she's a part of.

The scene opens at a gas station in Bellevue, Washington once owned by Mary Kate's grandparents. The family took extra care of their older customers, one of whom was fond enough of them to leave her car to them in her will. The car, a blue-green 1961 Dodge Lancer, would wind up in another customer's hands less than a year later when her own car died at the station and Mary Kate's granddad "traded" it for the Lancer.

To make a long story short, after many twists and turns the Lancer found its way back into Mary Kate's family's hands, and eventually to her personally, through more such acts of generosity. Much in need of work, Mary Kate and many of her family members pitched in to restore the Lancer to beautiful running condition.

Now that the Lancer's rolling, Mary Kate wants to get the cameras rolling too. As an accomplished photographer, performer, and filmmaker, she brings a lot of skills to the project.

But filmmaking's a collaborative process; bringing all the people parts together requires funding, and Mary Kate's working on putting that together—one piece at a time. Interested in learning more about the '61 Lancer's life story? Want to back the project? Curious to know how a film gets made? Head over to **marykateteske.com/the-lancer** to find out, and help Mary Kate Teske put *The Lancer's* pedal to the metal.

Theater

Cohesion Dance Project will celebrate Helena's 10th year of Shira Greenberg's Nutcracker on the Rocks, Saturday, November 30 and Sunday, December 1, 2024 at the Helena Civic Center.

Featuring the music of James Brown, Aretha Franklin, The Rolling Stones, Janis Joplin and more, this community based, rock-n-roll rendition of the holiday classic showcases a unique and energetic fusion of dancers and dance styles, along with a roaring Harley Davidson on stage!

"Leading audiences on a thrilling journey through the decades, *Nutcracker on the Rocks* artistically blends community dancers with professional visiting guest artists in creative partnerships and energetic collaborations, seamlessly weaving people of all ages and abilities, including those with disabilities, into the fabric of the choreography.

Nutcracker on the Rocks originated in Albuquerque, NM, and was performed there for 20 years. Helena now holds the prestigious honor of being the only location where this innovative production is staged.

Don't miss the excitement of Nutcracker on the Rocks this Thanksgiving weekend!

Show times: Saturday, November 30 at 7:30pm and Sunday, December 1 at 2:00pm.

Cohesion DANCE PROJECT

Dance

Queen City Ballet Company's 23rd Annual Production of "The Nutcracker",

November 23rd and 24th at Helena Civic Center

Presented by Associated Dermatology & Skin Cancer Clinic of Helena

The enchantment of the holiday season comes alive as Queen City Ballet Company, QCBC, proudly presents its 23rd annual production of *"The Nutcracker."* This timeless classic, beloved by audiences of all ages, will grace the stage at the Helena Civic Center on November 23rd and 24th, 2024. *"The Nutcracker"* is a cherished tradition for families and ballet enthusiasts set to the timeless music of Tchaikovsky. QCBC's production is known for its magnificent dancing, award-winning storytelling and lavish professional sets and costumes and has become a staple for the local cultural scene.

"This year, the performance is sure to captivate and delight both new and returning audiences with its timeless magic. Dancing Snowflakes, an awe-inspiring growing Christmas tree and Waltzing Flowers... there's nothing more enchanting than our classical production of *The Nutcracker!* This production is more than just a holiday tradition, but a wonderful way to introduce young audiences to the beauty and wonder of the performing arts and foster an appreciation for this beautiful artform." says Artistic Director Campbell Midgley.

The production features a talented cast of Queen City Ballet Company dancers, students, former alumni, and professional guest artists who bring to life the beloved characters of Clara, Herr Drosselmeyer, the Nutcracker Prince, Snow Queen, the Sugar Plum Fairy, and the Mouse King.

"Capital High junior Jaidyn McClain will grace the stage as the enchanting Sugarplum Fairy. Jaidyn's journey with the Queen City Ballet Company began as a tiny archangel in the 2011 production, and watching her blossom into the iconic role of the Sugarplum Fairy is a joy and privilege that truly captures her dedication and growth as an artist." says Midgley. Diablo Ballet's Luis Gonzalez, formerly of Joffery Ballet and Atlanta Ballet, portrays the Nutcracker Prince and Diablo Ballet's Micheal Bushman will return to dance the demanding role of the Cavalier. "We have an extraordinary lineup of guest artists and talented dancers this year, and I'm especially thrilled to announce the return of Jerry McCarthy to the beloved role of Drosselmeyer," boasts Midgley. "It fills me with pride to see so many generations of dancers coming together to create something truly magical. The blending of their talents and experiences is what makes this production so special and heartwarming."

Tickets can be purchased online at HelenaCivicCenter.com, by phone at 406-447-8481 or in person at the Helena Civic Center Box Office. Prices range from $18-$40 with special discounts available in the economy section for students and seniors. A limited number of VIP tables are available for groups.

Queen City Ballet Company is a non-profit 501(c)3 known for its dedication to excellence in the art of ballet and for its commitment to exceptional professional classical ballet, contemporary dance performances, training, and education programs that enhance the cultural life of Helena.

Music

HELIX.EXT
Coffee Donuts

HELIX.EXT core members, Jon Lodge (trumpet/electronics) & Shane de Leon (drums/guitar) improvise alongside bassist and new collaborator, Monte Allen. The inventive improvised pieces of free-noise funk skip by, fluttering in & out, repetitive grooves with distorto-trumpet feedback and rhythmic drone bop. Zone / freak out to this mix of free improvisation, & kicked out jams.

Monte Allen started legendary Portland, OR group Rollerball/RLLRBLL in 1993 with Mae Starr and Gilles. The original trio is still going strong. De Leon served a decade in Rollerball but departed in 2007 to begin Miss Massive Snowflake. This recording is Monte and Shane's first time playing together in 15 years.

Jon Lodge attended Berklee College of Music & has fostered free jazz, musique concrete, minimalism, & experimental music for decades in Billings, Montana. His visual art is in museums & galleries throughout the US. A whirlwind of ideas, energy, & love of life.

SEAN EAMON
With a Lean

With a Lean (2024), Sean Eamon's long-awaited new album, has hit the streets of Butte. It's also on Bandcamp, but the actual 180gm vinyl LP is popping up all over the state. BT Livermore deserves a shout out for some top-notch artwork housing this record, but the grooves inside feature some of the best old-school country that the seasoned performer Mr. Eamon has yet produced. Rumor has it God invented beer just so folks would have something to catch their tears when they listen to music like this.

Mr. Eamon recruited some splendid musicians to round out this sound, including Eric Heywood, who lays down pedal steel guitar so frenetic you might mistake it for a theremin, and the brilliant horns of Justin Ringsak and Garrett Smith. The horn section is already drawing comparisons to the Mexicana motif of "Ring of Fire"-era Johnny Cash, but I think the real point of reference here has to be Kris Kristofferson circa Me & Bobby McGee (1970) and Silver-Tongued Devil (1971). The first cut, "If Love Was a Fighter," in fact sounds quite like Kristofferson's "The Taker", and in the same way that that tune was the highlight of Silver-Tongued Devil, Eamon was savvy to get "If Love was a Fighter" at pole position on Side A.

Of course, Kristofferson was a disciple of Cash, and helped inaugurate the "outlaw" country sound, which renounced the sappy strings of Nashville. Eamon has done the same thing on With a Lean, taking on that authentic country honk and filling it out with lyrics that catalogue every bruise on a battered heart without getting all sentimental.

Ask pretty much any alternative country musician in Montana to name their favorite local songsmiths, and I bet Eamon will top the list. He's generally quiet, self-effacing, and a notoriously nice fellow, who, like the town he hails from, is about as far from pretentious as you can get without taking the interstate to Missoula.

Literary Arts

Finalists and winners celebrating the great region of the high plains at annual event. *Photo courtesy of High Plains Book Awards.*

A celebration of authors and books:

High Plains Book Awards continues to thrive 17 years after it was founded

By Jaci Webb

Back in 2007, retired Billings journalism and English teacher Lloyd Mickelson put together a proposal.

As president of the Billings Public Library Board, he had a like-minded audience who loved reading books as much as he did. So he pitched a plan to launch a book awards event that showcased authors from the great plains.

"Missoula always had book awards. I thought Billings has the largest library in the state, surely we could do something like that, but do it bigger."

His first phone call was to Corby Skinner, a long-time Billings arts and literary supporter. They enlisted the help of the late Sue Hart, a beloved literature and writing teacher from Montana State University Billings, and together they took the idea to the library board. The High Plains Book Awards was born.

Fast-forward to 2024, 17 years later, and the High Plains Book Awards continues to grow and evolve. That first year there were three categories, including fiction, non-fiction, and honoring an author for his or her collection of work. **For the 2024 High Plains Book Awards, there are 13 categories, with 209 nominated books. The finalists have been announced and include nine from Canada and 12 from Montana.** The winners will be announced on Oct. 5 at a 7 p.m. awards celebration in the Glacier Room at Montana State University Billings. Panel discussions will be held from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. in the Community Room of the Billings Public Library.

At the helm of High Plains are four women, board chair Shari Nault, vice-president TyRee Jenks, and board members Margie Sylvester and Lue Ponich. Each of the lead team members play a vital role in organizing and carrying out the book awards, including getting nominated books, finding community evaluators and book reviewers, working with judges, and finally putting together the live event.

Ponich, also a retired teacher, said each nominated book gets read four times by community volunteers. She pointed out that that is 1,000 books floating around the area. Not all the community readers live in Billings, which means either mailing or delivering the books to where the readers live. Thirteen book wranglers, one for each book category, get the books to the readers and make sure they are read and scored by the deadline. The books with the highest marks become finalists and are judged by authors, teachers and other professionals working in the field of literature. Reviews are written on all the finalists' books, and published on the High Plains' website, highplainsbookawards.org.

The organization is a non-profit 501 c 3, and board members work hard to find sponsors for each book category in order to give out $500 prizes to the winning authors. Nomination fees help the organization pay for lodging for authors. For 2024, there will be panel discussions on topics dictated by the books that were nominated. In 2023, a poetry panel was held because there were several poets available whose books made the finals. There have also been panels on how to write about real life.

"The panels are a big draw," Nault said.

The board members and volunteers that keep the High Plains Book Awards going year after year all share a love of books and reading, but the work goes far beyond the love of reading. Schulz estimates that 400 people get involved in the awards event every year. It is an international program as the book awards include Canadian authors.

This year, one third of the finalists are from Canada and another one-third are Montana authors. Among the finalists is Shirley Steele, a 98-year-old Billings poet who published her first book of poetry last year. Noted paleontologist Jack Horner is a finalist in the children's picture book category. Previous winners include such noteworthy authors as Tom McGuane, David Quammen, Louise Erdrich, and Emilie Danforth. Most finalists attend the awards event, and this year 25 of the 29 finalists are coming.

"They can sell books and network with other authors," Ponich said.

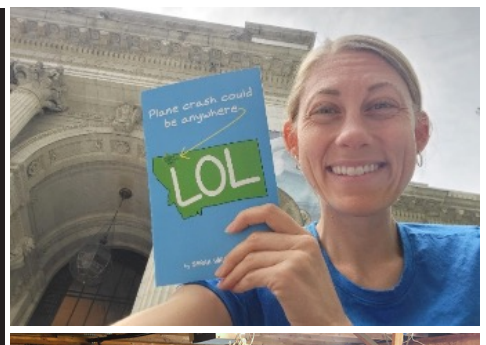
The board calls the live event Super Saturday as it is a full day starting with breakfast for the authors, panel discussions, and finally the live event where winners are announced. Meeting the authors and discussing books and writing with them is part of the reward for serving on the board.

"I love books. I've been a reader my whole life," board member Julie Schultz said.

In fact, Schultz loves books so much, she volunteers at This House of Books in Billings. After retiring from a career in finance on the East Coast, she came to Billings in 2016 and has been a community volunteer ever since.

As the saying goes, it does take a village to put on the High Plains Book Awards.

What does it mean ***to face a fear?***



Top right: Sarah with her zine on the steps of the New York Public Library. The zine is available at Fact and Fiction and HandMADE MT. It's available to read at the Missoula Public Library, The North Lake County Public Library, and the New York Public Library. **Bottom right, Writers at the St. Nell's reunion in Williamsport, PA.** *Photo credit Aimee LeCours.*

Sitting on an airplane to New York City, I'm watching clouds pass outside my window. I'm going to the *St. Nell's Humor Writing* conference, created by *New Yorker* cartoonist Emily Flake.

This trip is huge for me. I finally finished my manuscript (a graphic memoir). I'm chasing my dreams of being a writer. I'm on my way to meet other people chasing their dreams. A *Montana Arts Council* grant supports me.

But I'm finding it hard to focus on joy. I'm lightly crying, distracted by a question:

What does it mean to face a fear?

In 2010, I found myself on a different airplane, sobbing. Flying from London, England to Billings, I was headed home for a funeral. After searching the remote wilderness for three days, search parties found a plane's wreckage. The plane carried my older sister, Melissa.

For years after Melissa's death, I struggled to engage and care about life. There were so many changes. I couldn't figure out how to move forward (and stop crying on airplanes).

Although I was neither a professional artist or writer, I sat down to write and draw one day. I showed my story to a friend. He encouraged me to share the story more broadly.

I did.

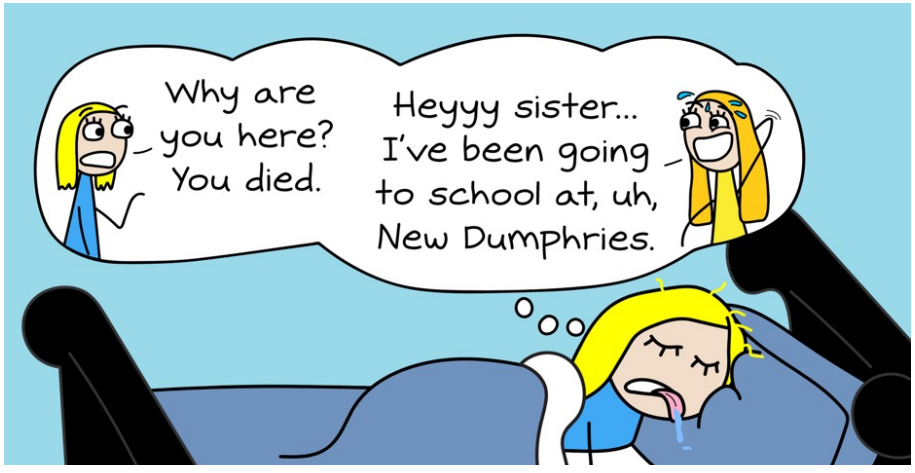
From Sarah's webcomic, Adventures With Vrah

My stories became a webcomic called *Adventures With Vrah* (Vrah is my family's nickname for me). Confronting first my sister's death, then my struggles with irritable bowel syndrome and depression, I wrote a series of stories about funny, tragic, and awkward situations.

Centered on the 3 "D's," these subjects are the core of my forthcoming graphic memoir, titled Death, Depression, and Diarrhea. My stories explore what it means to go through trauma and grow up, asking questions like:

- **"Is it OK to read a dead person's diary?"**
- **"Why did my Mom perform an exorcism on my Harry Potter books?"**
- **Is it a lie to say you have an older sister after she dies?**

The *Montana Arts Council* grant helped me print one of my stories (a zine), which asked the question, "Is an open casket better than a closed one?" The zine touches on the confusion of sudden trauma, seeking closure, and weird dreams after someone dies. I'm bringing my zine with me to the *St. Nell's* conference. I'm both excited and nervous to share it.



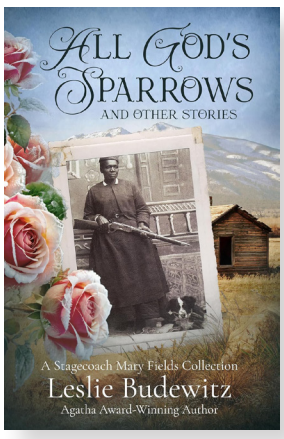
A drawing from Sarah's zine, titled "Plane crash could be anywhere, LOL." The zine is a story from her graphic memoir.

Going after my dreams of being a writer, I get scared a lot. Sharing my dreams and my writing makes me feel vulnerable. Though scary, I see vulnerability as essential to connecting with other people. If I'm open, maybe other people will feel encouraged to share about themselves. This give and take—listening and disclosing—helps me engage in life. And, hopefully, stop crying on airplanes.

Sitting on this airplane, above the clouds, I have a thought:

Maybe facing a fear means stepping into the dark—afraid, but lit by a spark. If I'm lucky, maybe that spark is enough. Enough to ignite my dreams.

Books



All God's Sparrows and Other Stories

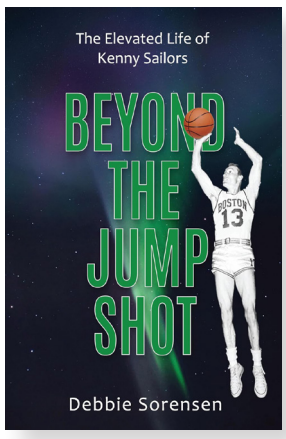
by Leslie Budewitz

Born into slavery in Tennessee, the remarkable "Stagecoach Mary" Fields was a larger-than-life figure who cherished her independence, yet formed a deep bond with the Ursuline Sisters, traveling to their Montana mission in 1885 and spending the last thirty years of her life living there or in nearby Cascade. Mary is believed to have been the first Black woman in the country to drive a U.S. Postal Star Route, the source of her nickname.

In *All God's Sparrows and Other Stories*, Agatha Award-winning author Leslie Budewitz brings together three short stories, each originally published in *Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine*, imagining the life of Stagecoach Mary in her first year in Montana, and a novella exploring her later life, including: *All God's Sparrows*, winner of the 2018 Agatha Award for Best Short Story; *Miss Starr's Goodbye*, a nominee for the Short Mystery Fiction Society's Derringer Award; *Coming Clean*, a finalist for the Western Writers of America's 2021 Spur Award for Best Short Story; and *A Bitter Wind*, a brand-new novella in which Mary helps a young woman newly arrived in the valley solve the mystery of her fiancé's death and his homesteading neighbors' bitterness toward him.

Ann Parker, author of the award-winning Silver Rush mysteries, remarks, "Budewitz masterfully illuminates the life of 'Stagecoach Mary' Fields with a deft hand and empathetic eye. Skillfully blending fact and fiction, Budewitz vividly portrays the remarkable journey of this little-known woman of the West, shining a light on her courage, resilience, and unyielding commitment to justice."

Leslie Budewitz blends her passion for food, great mysteries, and the Northwest in two cozy mystery series, the Spice Shop mysteries set in Seattle's Pike Place Market, and the Food Lovers' Village mysteries, set in NW Montana. As Alicia Beckman, she writes moody, stand-alone suspense. A three-time Agatha-Award winner (for Best Nonfiction, Best First Novel, and Best Short Story), and a nominee for the Anthony, Derringer, Macavity and Spur awards, she is a past president of Sisters in Crime and former board member of Mystery Writers of America. She lives in NW Montana.



Beyond the Jump Shot

by Debbie Sorensen

"Have you ever heard of Kenny Sailors?"

"Kenny who?"

"Didn't the jump shot always exist in basketball?"

The short answer is no.

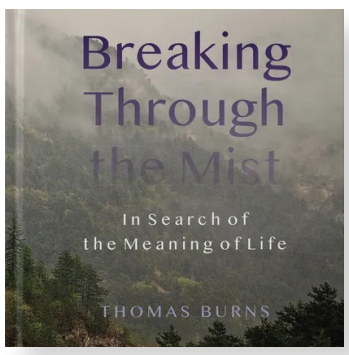
In the early 1900s, the sport of basketball was in its infancy. The basic elements of the game included passing the ball, no physical contact, and only two-handed set shots. Times were ripe for improvements and the development of new techniques.

A few notable players in the 1930s and 1940s began to jump and shoot a basketball. But it was Kenny Sailors who stepped in and made the modern-day jump shot famous.

Beyond the Jump Shot is a story of basketball and life that will elevate and inspire you to believe, and try something different.

FROM KENNY'S SON DAN:

"With the jump shot, my dad left his mark on basketball. His example in sports and life elevated others to become people of character, integrity, and faith. Pop taught those around him the value of hard work, respect for authority, and doing your best. He cared about his God, family, country, and the Marines. Basketball was a thread that ran through the life of Kenny Sailors. Pop realized there was life after sports and was compelled to encourage others to elevate their lives and dreams."



Breaking Through the Mist In Search of the Meaning of Life

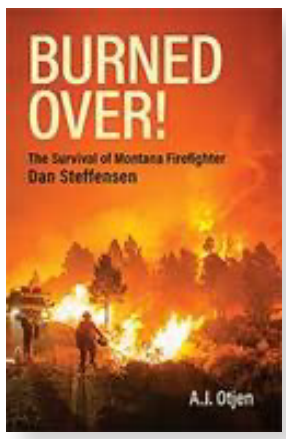
by Thomas Burns

Imagine transporting yourself to the past, peering into the future, or having life's most profound questions answered to your full satisfaction. Imagine knowing when to push ahead, pull back, or make critical decisions with total confidence.

Wouldn't these grand abilities constitute the Grail mankind has been seeking since time immemorial? Some might admonish you for delving into areas they believe should be left to the theologians, or question why you need to know more than what's already been penned in the world's sacred texts. Yet most would gladly give up everything to access such wisdom and knowledge.

Breaking Through the Mist, One Man's Journey in Search for the Meaning of Life, is a compilation of my insights drawn from the Higher Collective Consciousness, where mankind's noblest thoughts and concepts exist, and from where every evolutionary breakthrough originated since the first spark of consciousness warmed the planet.

The treasures of spirit are available to anyone anytime, through the simple conduits of intuition, meditation, journaling, the arts, mathematics, physics, dreams, or any other modality that connects you to your Higher Self. But there's a caveat: you must first crack the spiritual code of your eternal soul—*on your own terms*.



Burned Over!

by A. J. Otjen

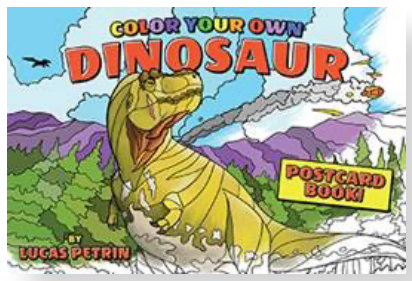
In 2021, Montana firefighter Dan Steffensen faced a wall of fire moving at sixty miles per hour. The flames engulfed him, burning over 60% of his body. Many believed his story would end tragically, but against all odds, Dan not only survived but triumphed, showcasing the indomitable resilience of the human spirit.

Burned Over! is the captivating tale of Dan's harrowing ordeal and his inspiring journey back to the frontlines of firefighting. Penned by acclaimed author A.J. Otjen, this compelling narrative takes readers through the heart-stopping moments of Dan's brush with death and the overwhelming support he received from the people around him.

Back on the firefighting roster and dedicating his time to supporting fellow burn survivors, Dan's story is one of unwavering perseverance and the pursuit of one's true calling. His story serves as a reminder that even in the face of unimaginable adversity, there is always strength to be found within ourselves and the communities that surround us.

10% of *Burned Over!* proceeds support the Wildland Firefighter Foundation, aiding families of fallen and injured firefighters.

A.J. Otjen is a seasoned marketing professor at Montana State University in Billings. With over two decades of experience as a marketing executive, she has also authored numerous articles and children's books, recognized by Indian Education for All, and chosen for award recognition in 2023 by the Library of Congress.



Color Your Own Dinosaur Postcard Book!

by Lucas Petrin

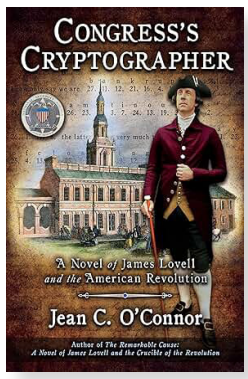
Color Your Own Dinosaur Postcard Book features captivating illustrations by paleocartoonist Lucas Petrin. This unique book invites dinosaur enthusiasts of all ages to unleash their creativity with 24 blank postcards, each showcasing imaginative renditions of your favorite dinosaurs.

Known for his passion for paleontology and stylized artwork, Petrin brings these dinosaurs to life in a way that sparks curiosity and imagination. Each postcard provides a canvas for coloring these majestic creatures as they may have appeared millions of years ago.

Petrin's illustrations not only entertain but also educate, making this postcard book a perfect gift for dinosaur enthusiasts and anyone fascinated by prehistoric life.

A blend of educational fun and artistic expression, Lucas Petrin's illustrations are accompanied by fun facts about each featured dinosaur illustration.

Lucas Petrin found his passion for paleontology early in his life, and ever since has worked tirelessly to help fill in the gaps in how we see prehistoric life with stylized illustrations. While a student at Rowan University, Lucas ran a Kickstarter campaign for a prototype of his game Fossil Fracas: Not-So-Nice Age, and proceeded to create the art for four of the Jean & Richard Edelman Fossil Park of Rowan University's dinosaur themed beers. He continues to work as a graphics editor.


CONGRESS'S CRYPTOGRAPHER
A Novel of James Lovell and the American Revolution
Jean C. O'Connor
Author of The Remarkable Cause: A Novel of James Lovell and the Crucible of the Revolution

Congress's Cryptographer: A Novel of James Lovell and the American Revolution

by Jean C. O'Connor

Jean C. O'Connor's historical fiction novel *Congress's Cryptographer: A Novel of James Lovell and the American Revolution* (Mountain Pine Press, 2024), based on extensive primary source research, tells the story of "forgotten founder" James Lovell's five years in the Continental Congress during the American Revolution. During his service in Congress, James Lovell is our first Secretary of Foreign Affairs, in charge of diplomatic correspondence with Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and others in Europe; he interviews many French officers who arrive to offer their services, including Lafayette; he befriends Abigail Adams in a vital correspondence; and he deciphers captured messages for generals, including one from Cornwallis that revealed British weakness and assisted Washington's vital victory at Yorktown.

Jean's first novel presents the early part of James Lovell's life in *The Remarkable Cause: A Novel of James Lovell and the Crucible of the Revolution* (Knox Press, 2021). James supported patriots who resisted British taxes and authority, while his father, John Lovell, the Master of the Boston Latin School, stood with the Loyalists. Imprisoned for spying, James spent many miserable months in prison; upon his release he joined the Continental Congress.

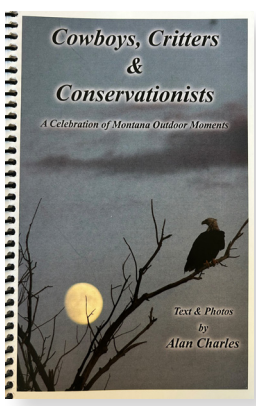
Because of her research into James Lovell's life, and since he was her five times great-grandfather, the National Security Agency contacted her about their plan to induct James Lovell into the 2023 Cryptologic Hall of Honor. The Director of the National Security Agency, General Paul Nakasone, called her to inform her of the honor. She and her sister Barbara attended the event at the National Security Agency in Fort Meade, MD, on January 29, 2024. General Paul Nakasone, Director of the National Security Agency, hosted the induction of James Lovell, along with four other individuals who had contributed in significant ways to national security in WWII.

General Nakasone made it clear that the induction into the Cryptologic Hall of Honor was a real honor, say that of the 330,000 who have worked at NSA since its founding in 1952, only 115 have been inducted into the Cryptologic Hall of Honor.

John A. Tokar, Chief of the Center for Cryptologic History for the National Security Agency and Central Security Service, said this about James Lovell:

"James Lovell is considered 'the Father of American Cryptanalysis' by no less an authority than David Kahn, and William Friedman called him 'the Revolution's one-man National Security Agency.' His pioneering work as a codemaker and a codebreaker gave cryptology a singular role in the emergence of the new nation. He is a landmark figure in the history of American cryptanalysis and cryptography, and a model for present and future generations."

Congress's Cryptographer includes images of James Lovell's cipher in letters to diplomats, as well as several of his cipher keys. As an added bonus, readers can try writing in James Lovell's keyword cipher, guided by a page in the Afterword. See jeanoconnor.com for links to the sale of both of Jean's novels.



Cowboys, Critters & Conservationists: A Celebration of Montana Outdoor Moments

by Alan Charles

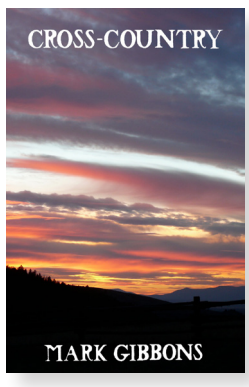
Alan Charles says the first outdoor moments he remembers are when he was four years old, sitting with his father and a golden retriever in pit blinds at Nine Pipes Reservoir north of Missoula waiting for mallards.

After high school, he enlisted in the Army and served three years with the 2nd Armored Division. He spent the next eight years on the Texas Gulf Coast, working construction, oilfield, and commercial fishing jobs, while also earning a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and journalism and editing two magazines, Gulf Coast Fisherman and Texas Outdoors.

In 1983, Alan purchased land in the Pine Hills east of Miles City, Montana. He worked as a government cowboy for Fort Keogh Livestock and Range Research Station for seven years, and spent the next twenty years working for Montana Fish, Wildlife, & Parks (FWP) as Coordinator of Landowner/Sportsman Relations. He retired in 2016.

His stories and articles have appeared in numerous publications, including Montana Sportsman Newspaper, Montana Outdoors, Montana Hunting and Fishing News, Bugle, Waterfowler's World, Outdoor Life, Montana Sportsman's Journal, Bozeman Chronicle, Billings Gazette, Lewistown News-Argus, Miles City Star, Terry Tribune, Farm & Ranch Weekly, and others.

In 2023, Montana Wildlife Federation awarded him "The Unsung Wildlife Hero Award," citing "In recognition of years of insightful and engaging weekly outdoor columns that appear in numerous SE Montana publications. Your writing brings people together around thoughtful conservation, hunting ethics, and fair chase..."



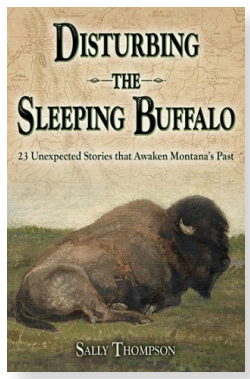
Cross-Country

by Mark Gibbons

Cross-Country is a long poem written after a four day journey in a U-Haul from coast to coast. Like all travel poems it is an account of that experience in the ways that poets wander and record time. Mark Gibbons made the trip in 2018. A native Montanan, he spent twenty years as a professional mover driving the western states but had never ventured farther east than Nebraska. *Cross-Country* was written after he flew to Boston, drove a U-Haul down to New York and then headed west, his destination, Seattle.

This poem turned chapbook is Gibbons' brief attempt to retrace that journey across the American landscape and his own mind-scape, the stages and pages of interstate highways, natural and historical landmarks, his perceptions and visions contemplating the undefinable boundaries of fatherhood and time. *Cross-Country* is a different love poem wanting to be a recipe for survival.

Mark Gibbons. Montana Poet Laureate (2021-23) is the author of eleven books of poetry. He's also edited poetry collections for Drumlummon Institute (Helena, MT) and FootHills Publishing (Kanona, NY). Gibbons holds an MFA from the University of Montana and has taught poetry over the last three decades while working a variety of blue collar jobs to pay the rent. He lives in Missoula, Montana, with his wife, Pam.



Disturbing the Sleeping Buffalo

by Sally Thompson

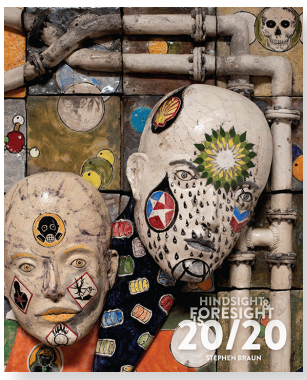
Renowned anthropologist and storyteller Sally Thompson draws on her extensive experience and delves deep into the fabric of Montana's past with her latest book, *Disturbing the Sleeping Buffalo: 23 Unexpected Stories that Awaken Montana's Past.*

In this compelling collection of twenty-three true stories, Thompson unearths hidden treasures, shedding light on the diverse peoples who have shaped Montana's landscape over thousands of years.

Thompson's unique perspective and meticulous research reveal the complexities of Montana's history, from encounters between Native American tribes and European explorers to the cultural exchanges that have shaped the region's identity. Through vivid storytelling, she bridges the gap between past and present, inviting readers to explore the hidden depths of Montana's collective heritage.

"I invite readers to join me on backroads for intimate glimpses of people, places, and events that tell a different history than the ones learned in history class." — Sally Thompson, author

Sally Thompson, an anthropologist and cultural heritage consultant based in Missoula, Montana, has spent decades exploring the state's cultural history in collaboration with Montana tribal communities. Her narrative nonfiction writings, such as People Before the Park, illuminate overlooked perspectives and offer readers a fresh look at the history of the Treasure State.



Hindsight & Foresight 20/20

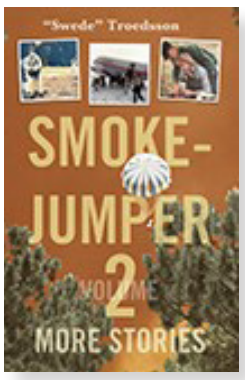
by Stephen Braun

"We're honored to have published this groundbreaking book by a true artist of our time," said *Whitefish Review* founding editor Brian Schott. "Stephen's art provides a deep commentary on the times we are living in as a society and can be a guidepost for the future as we wrestle with environmental, social, and political issues."

"We lost our power when we stopped being citizens and became consumers," says Braun. "This change has empowered corporation rights over human rights."

Stephen Braun has been making environmental, social and politically-themed ceramic sculptures for over 40 years. While studying at the University of Montana in the late 1970s he became smitten with ceramics. UM was a ceramics powerhouse with Rudy Autio and Ken Little teaching. Museums and galleries throughout the US and world have displayed his work and hosted his lectures and workshops.

In addition to commentary by the artist, the 142-page book contains essays by Michael Jamison, Lucy R. Lippard, Peter Koch, and Cory Walsh. Chris Autio was the lead photographer on the project and Ian S. Griffiths served as art director for the book. Leading up to the event, selections of Braun's work will be displayed at Underscore Art Gallery in downtown Whitefish, owned by Monica Pastor, a lead art editor on the publication.



Smokejumper Volume 2: More Stories

by Swede Troedsson

Building on the thrilling stories from the first volume, *Smokejumper Volume 2* takes readers on a wild ride through the rugged Montana wilderness, highlighting the untold challenges Swede faced while battling wildfires, rescuing the injured, and surviving some of the most perilous conditions imaginable. From fire suppression and aviation management to hunting and volunteering with Montana Game Wardens, Swede's stories are a testament to the grit and determination required to thrive in the outdoors.

Smokejumper Volume 2 also includes a never-before-seen, detailed account of one of the most famous backcountry rescues in Montana history—Hank Williams Jr.'s 1975 near-death experience on Ajax Mountain.

Smokejumper Volume 2 brings readers into the heart of the wilderness, where danger is ever-present and the call to adventure is irresistible.

"Swede" Troedsson was born and raised in the East, but his heart belongs to Montana. After serving in the U.S. Marine Corps and working as a forester, smokejumper, and EMS volunteer, Swede spent over 30 years in the Beaverhead National Forest. He taught outdoor skills at the University of Montana Western, sharing his love of the outdoors with students for nearly two decades. Now retired, Swede continues to explore and protect the Montana wilderness he calls home.

To Err is Cumin

by Leslie Budewitz

Leslie Budewitz is back with another savory mystery waiting to be solved. . .

One person's treasure is another's trash. . .

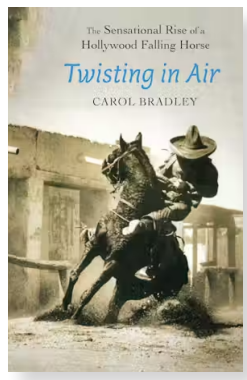
Pepper Reece, owner of the Spice Shop in Seattle's Pike Place Market, wants nothing more than to live a quiet life for a change, running her shop and working with customers eager to spice up their cooking. But when she finds an envelope stuffed with cash in a ratty old wingback left on the curb, she sets out to track down the owner.

Pepper soon concludes that the chair and its stash may belong to young Talia Cook, new in town and nowhere to be seen. Boz Bosworth, an unemployed chef Pepper's tangled with in the past, shows up looking for the young woman, but Pepper refuses to help him search. When Boz is found floating in the Ship Canal, only a few blocks from Talia's apartment, free furniture no longer seems like such a bargain.

On the hunt for Talia, Pepper discovers a web of connections threatening to ensnare her best customer. The more she probes, the harder it gets to tell who's part of an unsavory scheme of corruption—and who might be the next victim.

Between her quest for an elusive herb, helping her parents remodel their new house, and setting up the Spice Shop's first cooking class, Pepper's got a full plate. Dogged by a sense of obligation to find the rightful owner of the hidden treasure, she keeps on showing up where she's not wanted, asking probing questions.

One mistake, and she could find herself cashing out. . .



Twisting in Air

by Carol Bradley

Twisting in Air chronicles the gritty and glittery era when an extraordinary group of horses made Western movies come alive and explores how one of them, Cocaine, overcame a debilitating injury to become the fastest falling horse of all. Falling horses came into being in the 1940s after movie studios agreed to abide by the Hollywood Production Code's ban on cruelty to animals and stop using deadly trip wires, tilt chutes, and covered pits to topple unsuspecting horses. Filmmakers still wanted to depict horses falling in battle, however, so they went looking for a new wave of "acting" horses who could tumble to the ground on command.

Cocaine was a thoroughbred–quarter horse mix who doubled many times for John Wayne's horse Dollar and appeared in a number of Westerns directed by John Ford. Coke was one of only a couple dozen horses who mastered the demanding athleticism required to fall safely at will. *Twisting in Air* offers an absorbing look at the dark early history of stunt horses in movies and the development of falling horses, the stunt riders who owned, trained, and depended on them, and the behind-the-scenes circumstances in which they performed.

Montana's Poets Laureate Celebrated in New Work

By Eric Heidle

Every two years since 2005, Montana has bestowed a special title on one of its many talented writers: Montana Poet Laureate. The post was created to honor exemplary poets from the Big Sky who write, read, and teach this most ancient of artforms— the written and spoken word. There's no better way to celebrate these distinguished talents than by sharing their work.

The Montana Arts Council is publishing the first anthology collecting work from each of Montana's poets laureate, past and present. Selected by the authors themselves, the poems presented in *This Place the Gods Touched Earth* represent a vibrant chorus of voices singing the praises and pitfalls of life in this place we call Montana. Produced in partnership with the Montana Historical Society, *This Place the Gods Touched Earth* celebrates the writing and reading of poetry, but also the work of poetry—travel to all corners of the state, teaching this craft to new poets, advocating for literacy and support of this most vital art.

Publishing in November 2024, *This Place the Gods Touched Earth* features an introductory essay by current Montana Poet Laureate Chris La Tray, and includes biographies, short essays, and the selected works of our poets laureate to date. You can find it at independent bookstores or by ordering online from Farcountry Press or the Montana Historical Society Press.

We plan a launch event on Wednesday, November 20th at 6pm at the Myrna Loy in Helena. Please join us in celebrating these treasured poets and their words which evoke, capture, lament, and embrace this place the gods touched earth.

art.mt.gov/anthology
farcountrypress.com
mhs.mt.gov/pubs/Books

Cover Illustration by David Miles Lusk

Native Arts

Becoming Little Shell: A Landless Indian's Journey Home

Story by Eric Heidle
Author: Chris La Tray
2024, Milkweed Editions

Becoming Little Shell is a mystery novel of sorts, though you'll find it squarely shelved in the nonfiction rows. The book is a kind of police procedural of the soul, moving from clue to tantalizing clue in its reconstruction of the motives, means, and opportunities which fueled one of the great injustices—the great crimes—of our history: the dispossession of the Chippewa and Métis from their ancestral lands. Scattered like seeds thrown westward into the wind, these peoples nevertheless took root where they landed, and grew.

This book is a story of that. But unlike a true-crime potboiler or the bitterest noir thriller, *Becoming Little Shell* isn't motivated by cynicism, or corruption, or decay. It's a story propelled by hope and wonder and the connections that time and distance and neglect can't dull or destroy. It's the story of a whole people, and it's the story of a man.

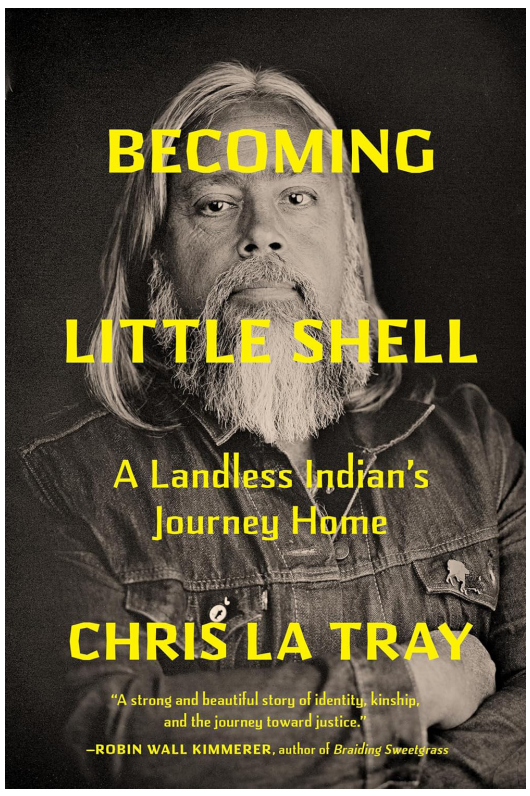
Chris La Tray didn't really know about his Indian-ness until nearly the worst possible time to learn—his grandfather's funeral. Suddenly among relatives he didn't know, because of his father's denial of their family's history, Chris began needing to learn. Through the course of travel and study and meeting and listening, Chris began picking at the threads of his story, and of history. Threads that dangled from his family's past soon wove their way into a wider fabric, knit together in shades of meaning, in bands of family, bands of Chippewa. The unfolding story of his connection to this wider world encircles and contains, much like the colorful many-banded sashes the Métis did and do wear. As Chris writes, though these sashes might contain colors symbolic of prosperity or the Métis flag or other associations, "finally, the colors might be entirely personal to the wearer."

The Métis sash turns out to be functional, though, too, a kind of "Batman utility belt" the Métis would cinch their coats with and carry goods in and use to herd up recalcitrant children. Chris La Tray brings a wealth of tools to the craft of storytelling too, bundled seamlessly together in *Becoming Little Shell's* narrative. It's a hard thing to go home when you don't know where that is, and when the people you're a part of don't have one at all. The story of the Little Shell band of Chippewa's quest to have the US government assert—not recognize—their existence, to work toward finding home, is one Chris chips away at with the keenest of tools: unvarnished honesty. The bleakness and rapacity of North America's colonization can be hard reading, but Chris' voice is as fair as it is telling, bright with humor and care as well as toughness. He lets my second hometown of Great Falls down easy while admitting it's "a difficult city to love;" easy to understand when it's part of his longer account of how a revered Chippewa stronghold there is somehow named after Heinz 57 sauce. It's a horrible, funny, absurd detail, the kind that violent clashes of cultures litter messily in their wakes.

That Chris La Tray brings these skills to this work cannot be a surprise; he's published two volumes of verse and essay and sheer observation. He's the incumbent poet laureate of this place we now call Montana, though in truth he's been on the job for years before getting the call. In writing this book, and those books, La Tray has Chris-crossed the west in search of answers for himself and the Métis and the Chippewa, and he's strewn some sparks of his own along the way. Frequently reading from his work, mentoring others, especially those from the next crop of poets, listening in order to learn from those still alive to know, and speaking from the heart with that same deft chisel of honesty, Chris has participated in the survival of stories. And stories are the fabric of traditions and ways of life, and of whole peoples.

In the film of the late Carl Sagan's science-fiction novel *Contact*, a lone human representative is sent to the end of the universe to connect with another civilization, one that's older and deeper by far than the one she knows. Ellie, an astronomer, arrives at her destination dumbstruck by the beauty and richness and humanity she finds at the other side. Brimming with tears, she can only mumble, "No words…poetry…they should have sent a poet." In telling the story of the Métis, and of the Little Shell band of the Chippewa, in setting the history straight and telling how it was and should be with clarity and grace, the tools of precision and honesty and fact are necessary. But their story is more than that too, and to tell it in full they'll need to send a poet.

With this book and this writer, they surely have.


BECOMING
LITTLE SHELL
A Landless Indian's Journey Home
CHRIS LA TRAY
"A strong and beautiful story of identity, kinship, and the journey toward justice."
–ROBIN WALL KIMMERER, author of Braiding Sweetgrass

Wendy Red Star *Wins MacArthur Fellowship*

In late-breaking news as this issue of *State of the Arts* was prepping for press, we heard the amazing news that Billings native and Montana State University graduate Wendy Red Star has been named a 2024 MacArthur Fellow for her multimedia work using archival material and contemporary cultural objects to reevaluate historical narratives about Indigenous peoples.

An enrolled member of the Apsáalooke tribe, Red Star's work often comments with humor and irony on the persistent stereotypes of Native peoples in American culture. Collage, photography, fabric, Crow decorative patterns, consumer goods, and any other elements which help drive home the point are put to use in her work, and the results are frequently both wildly funny and deeply sobering at the same time.

The MacArthur fellowships are commonly called the "genius grants" for their goal of recognizing "extraordinarily talented and creative individuals as an investment in their potential." In the case of Wendy Red Star, it's fair to say that she's well ahead of that, having realized her own potential through a rich and varied body of work. The acclaim and considerable financial reward that come with the prize can only help guarantee that the rest of the world realizes it as well.

Learn more about Wendy Red Star and her work at www.wendyredstar.com

2024 Governor's *Arts* Awards

MONTANA
ARTS COUNCIL
an agency of state government

Every two years the Montana Arts Council oversees a unique undertaking: recognizing a small number of distinguished Montana artists and arts organizations which exemplify the visual, performing, literary, and traditional arts. The Governor's Arts Awards, presented in the Governor's name, honor outstanding Montana citizens and organizations whose achievements in the arts, or on behalf of the arts, benefit all Montanans.

The Governor's Arts Awards are the highest honor bestowed by the state on those working in the arts and creative fields and seek to grant recognition for those whose long careers and dedication to making art in the Last Best Place enrich the lives of everyone around them.

Governor Greg Gianforte agrees. "Through this award, we're proud to recognize Montanans for their unique ability to showcase the beauty of our landscapes, mark moments in history, and represent the sights and sounds of our vibrant culture. For generations, the Treasure State has stirred the creativity of writers, artists, and musicians, and we're glad to honor these individuals for their talents."

This year's honorees embody those values through their work, their insight, and their willingness to live in Montana and create art which expresses the importance of this place. They work in often humble media" metal, glass bead, music, and paint. But their use of these materials transforms medium into meaning, for all Montanans.

This year's recipients will be honored in a ceremony at the State Capitol in Helena at 2pm on December 5. All Montanans are invited to attend and join in celebrating these accomplished Montanans' inspiring careers.

Courtesy of Jackie Larson Bread

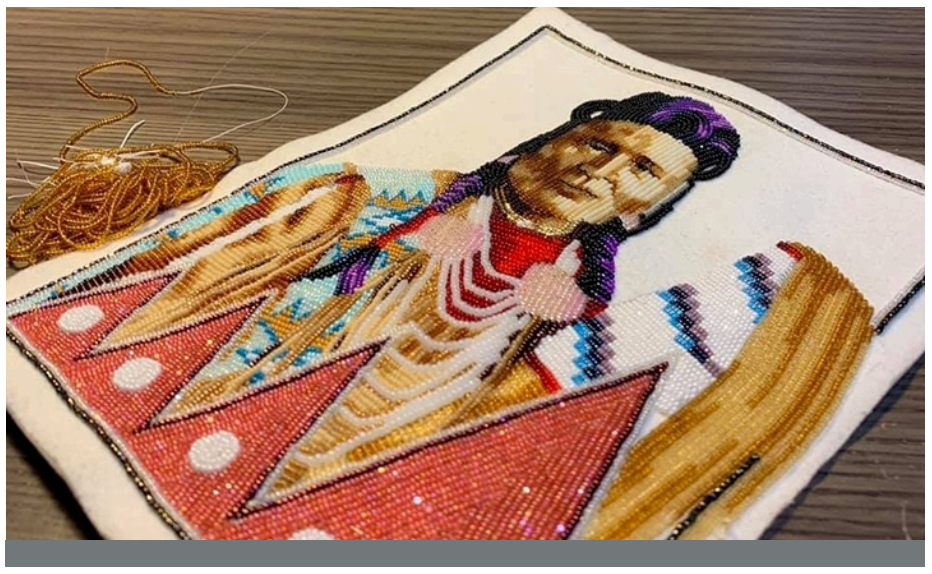
Jackie Larson Bread

Jackie Larson Bread of Great Falls is an endlessly innovative bead artist and culture carrier of the Piikuni Blackfeet nation. Her work blends traditional Blackfeet geometric and floral designs with stunning contemporary photorealism and painterly techniques. She uses traditional materials including brain-tanned buckskin, fur, brass bells and beads, and ribbons to tell a narrative and often personal story of the people, land, and animals of her homeland. Jackie uses a limited palette of colors to produce beaded pieces true to a specific time period. Using old stock beads – and sometimes modern reruns of old colors – she lends a feel of authenticity to all her works.

Bread has served as a consultant on Blackfeet traditional art for the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. She has taught dozens of training classes for adults and children focusing on Blackfeet beadwork and material culture. She has shared her art and the Blackfeet culture in many venues, and throughout her career has collaborated with several notable artists. Over her fifty years of creating work, she has remained fascinated by the beauty, the construction, the meaning, the color, the tactile property, and the familial connection of these beaded pieces.

Jackie's beadwork has been recognized with awards from the prestigious Heard Museum Show, in Phoenix, Arizona; the Santa Fe Indian Market; and the Northern Plains Tribal Arts Show in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. She was the 2016 recipient of Native American Art Magazine's award of excellence. She is the frequent blue-ribbon award recipient at the Santa Fe Indian Art Market, as well.

Jackie's artworks are housed in many permanent and private collections, including the Smithsonian Institution Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C.; the C.M. Russell Museum in Great Falls; and the Museum of Art and Design, in New York.



Courtesy of Jim Dolan

Jim Dolan

Jim Dolan is a metal sculptor with a career spanning five decades. His portfolio includes over 170 large-scale public pieces world-wide and thousands of private pieces. Jim's style of welding steel and other metals into realistic representations is unique among sculptors. His sculptures range from table-top size to a golden eagle with a 36-foot wingspan, installed in Osaka, Japan. Aside from large sculpture, he creates three-dimensional, heat-endured metal paintings as well as architectural design elements. Observing the beauty and complexity of nature, Jim seeks to inspire others to appreciate nature and pursue their own talents and passions.

Raised in California, Jim knew Montana would be his home. While studying agriculture at Montana State University (MSU), he petitioned to receive in-state tuition. His reasoning being he would make his life and living in Montana, contributing to the state throughout his life. True to his word, Jim has spent his career in Montana.

After graduating, he started making metal sculptures. Rather than continuing with a career in ag, Jim's passion for art took over. He became a full-time metal sculptor, never looking back.

Most importantly, Jim believes in sharing his art. As a result, he is most proud of his public art around the United States and abroad. Above all, he has made good on his promise to contribute to Montana. Most noteworthy, as a gift to the people of the state of Montana, he created and donated the "Bleu Horses" in 2013. His largest installation, the herd of 39 blue horses are located on a hill off Highway 287 near Three Forks, Montana. Showing his gratitude to MSU, he has donated four sculptures to the campus. These include "Walt Whitman," "Ludwig," "Black Elk," and "Abraham Lincoln." His latest donation of Lincoln was unveiled for MSU's 125th anniversary.

Courtesy of John Dunnigan

John Dunnigan

John Dunnigan moved to the Flathead Valley in 1978. He had been playing his guitar and singing to earn a living for several years and found the Montana valley a great place to live and work. Keeping busy he started a family and raised two sons through his music career.

Over the course of finding places to perform, John started playing at fairs and festivals gaining a reputation as a great entertainer. Oftentimes when playing at a county fair somewhere in the Pacific Northwest, he would volunteer to play for local non-profit organizations. John continued performing throughout the Dakotas, Montana, Wyoming, Idaho, Oregon and Washington.

Always returning to his home base of Whitefish, Montana. John has recorded many of his songs and made them available on CD. His sons grew and completed college, financed by John's continuing performing schedule. John's son Andy followed in his footsteps and is the leader of a nationally popular bluegrass band, The Little Smokies.

John continues to contribute to his community playing for North Valley Music School fundraisers and other non-profits in the Flathead Valley. Wintertime finds him playing four nights a week at area venues drawing crowds of locals and visitors alike.

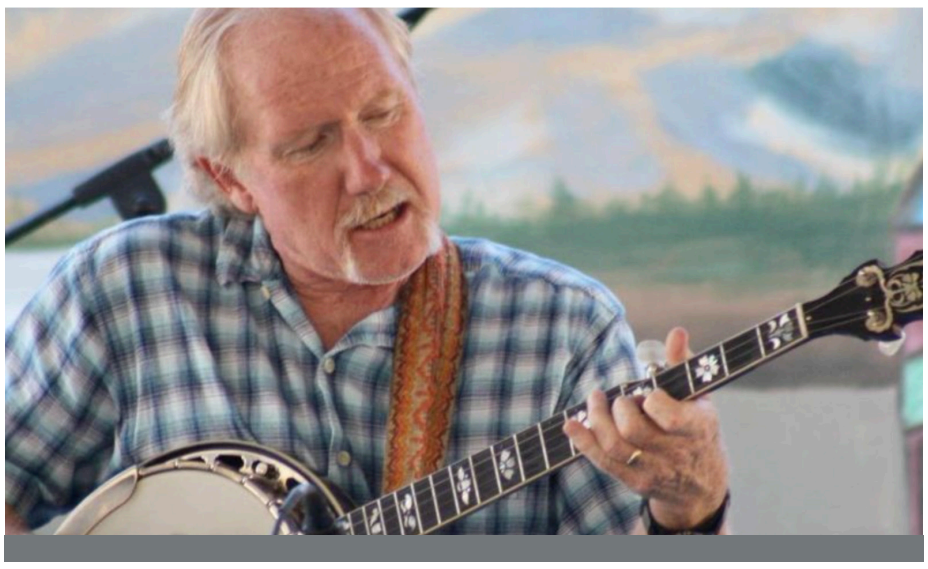


Photo by Joanne Gardner Lowell

John Lowell

John Lowell has been performing in the Mountain West for the past 43 years. He's toured the world with his bands Kane's River, Growling Old Men, Wheel Hoss, and the John Lowell Band.

John is a triple threat – songwriter, singer, and guitarist – and performs worldwide. He's been featured on Garrison Keillor's "Prairie Home Companion" and is the 2022 winner of the International Western Music Association's Cowboy Song of the Year for a track from his release, "She's Leaving Cheyenne" which was named Album of the Year by Wyoming Public Radio.

John teaches at music camps in the US, UK, Canada and Europe and serves on the IBMA songwriting committee. He's recently performed at the Kerrville Folk Festival and the Lone Star Cowboy Poetry Gathering in Texas, the Crossroads Festival in Nottingham, UK and at the Finding Your Roots Festival in Ireland. He'll perform in 2024 at the Cody Songwriters Festival and the Grand Targhee Bluegrass Festival, among other touring dates in Florida, Kansas, Montana and Texas. He did his 11th European tour last fall and has tours to the UK and Europe planned for 2024. John and his wife (and frequent musical partner) Joanne Gardner Lowell live in Livingston, MT.

Photo by Eric Heidle

Mary Gayle Shanahan

Montana artist Mary Gayle Shanahan has been painting portraits since she was eleven years old. She has spent her whole life in Montana, the majority of it in Helena. Gayle is a watercolorist, a pastel and pen-and-ink artist, and a book illustrator. She is best known for her portraiture, especially of children and distinguished Montanans. Mary Gayle's portraits hang in public and private collections all over the state and the country. She grew up in Billings and majored in art at Billings Senior High School and later earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Montana, where she was a student of Aden Arnold, James Dew, and Walter Hook. She continued her studies under renowned portrait and landscape painters in Europe, Canada, and Mexico as well as across the United States. She studied and taught portraiture for over sixty years. Her authentic and recognizable portraits hang in private and public collections throughout Montana and the United States.

Shanahan's passion for Montana, its art and history led her to collaborate with historian Jean Baucus to create a guide to the historical mansions of Helena, which is a prized possession of many local residents. Her pen and ink drawings of notable buildings in Butte, Anaconda, Three Forks, Billings and Helena are testament to her love of historic architecture and technical skill as an artist.

Congratulations!

Hidden Treasure in Montana

Story and photos by Jeffrey Conger

Mann Gulch Fire Mural by Elise Perpignano

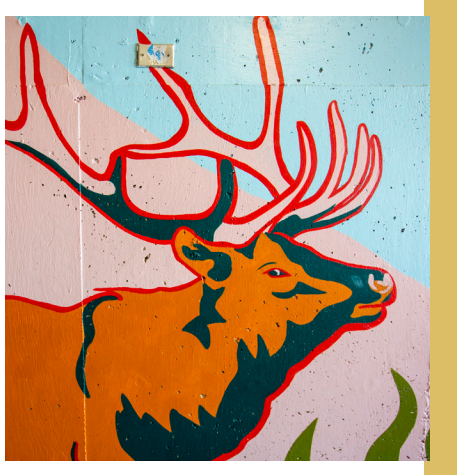
This mural is inspirational and beautiful! The new public art by Elise Perpignano called "Wildfire," in Helena is a tribute to the 75th anniversary of the legendary Mann Gulch Fire. It spotlights the bravery of smokejumpers and the restorative natural cycle after a wildfire. Selected out of nearly 20 submissions to the City of Helena, the colorful mural is over 2,000 square feet and adorns the Lyndale Tunnel, which connects the Great Northern Town Center and Centennial Park in Helena.

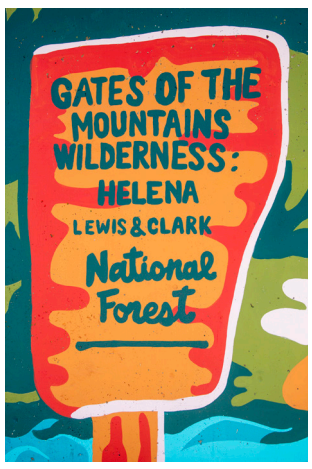
The north entrance of the mural memorializes the brave smokejumpers of the Mann Gulch fire on August 5, 1949, and depicts "Miss Montana," a World War II-era twin-engine DC-3 airplane.

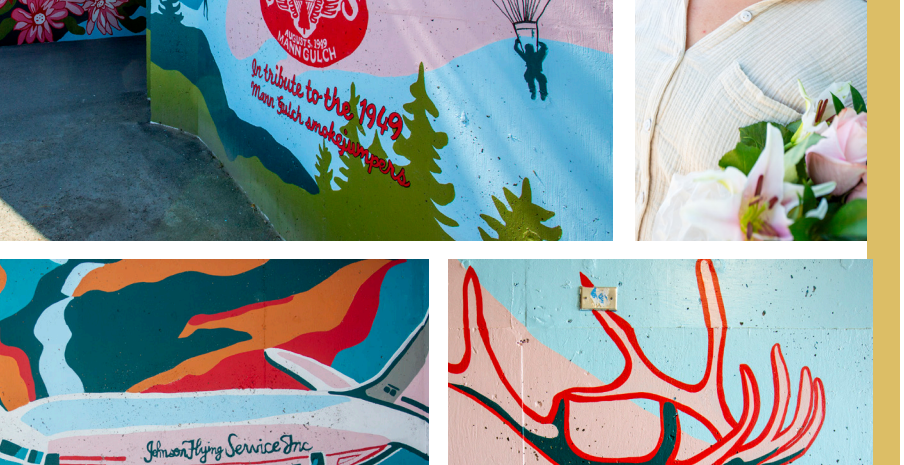
The tunnel's interior depicts the forest's rebirth after fire. Wildflowers and plants emerge, feeding animals like chipmunks and birds that disperse seeds. As the forest matures, it supports diverse wildlife before eventually becoming fuel for future fires. Tastefully placed in the tunnel's center is a tribute to Juliana Turchetti, a fallen firefighting pilot, during the recent 2024 Horse Gulch Fire. The south side of the tunnel depicts a hand-painted sign for the Gates of the Mountains Wilderness, along with the artist's signature with the year created.

Throughout the mural project, Perpignano pursued extensive research using the U.S. National Forest Service archives and referred multiple times to Norman Maclean's iconic book *Young Men and Fire*. Working in unpredictable Montana summer weather presented several obstacles for the artist. With May being unseasonably cold, painting was prohibited, then June being overly wet, and July jumping to record heat. All the while, Elise persevered to complete the mural for the 75th anniversary ribbon-cutting ceremony on August 5, 2024.

The next time you are in Helena, visit the new "Wildfire" mural as you walk under Lyndale Avenue on your way to the Exploration Works Science Museum or the Great Northern Carousel. To learn more about smokejumping pick up a copy of *Young Men and Fire* by Norman Maclean or watch the Montana PBS documentary film "Higgins Ridge". Also, be sure to visit the artist Elise Perpignano's website at www.perpignano.art to see more of her graphic design and mural artwork.







The new mural "Wildfire" for the City of Helena, created by Montana native Elise Perpignano, commemorates the 75th anniversary of the Mann Gulch Fire. On that special day, the City of Helena hosted a public ribbon-cutting ceremony presided over by Mayor Wilmot Collins and attended by City Commissioners Andy Shirtliff and Emily Dean, U.S. Forest Service Public Affairs Officer Chiara Cipriano, the mural artist Elise Perpignano, and the community at large.

Tinwork Art's campus featuring living artwork *Wheatfield—An Inspiration*. *Photo by Eric Heidle.*

Harvest Among the Houses

By Eric Heidle

Summer's come and gone, and with it a very different kind of artwork in Bozeman's trendy brewery district. For a few warm months, the open plot forming the south end of Tinworks Art's campus became a productive bit of agricultural ground, a celebration of open space, and an artistic statement on the ways we value place. Over the course of Montana's short summer season, this patch of undeveloped land became a living artwork called *Wheatfield—An Inspiration. The seed is in the ground.* True to its name, the site was a live, growing wheat field and the fruition of the vision of conceptual artist Agnes Denes.

As we wrote in the Spring issue this year, *Wheatfield* is a continuation of Denes' literally groundbreaking 1982 work *Wheatfield—A Confrontation*, grown in the twin shadows of the World Trade Center and one of the world's great financial hubs. Like that work, Bozeman's *Wheatfield* comments on the irony of giving over a few acres of ground to the purpose of feeding people rather than plowing it under toward more profitable ends. It's an iteration of the meta-commentary present on the rest of Tinworks' campus: once a working metal shop and grain mill, the buildings here now house different sorts of commodities and employ people plying new kinds of skills in service to their community.

And the ideas behind *Wheatfield* find their ways inside those buildings too, in the other exhibitions which Tinworks has curated under the collective title *The Lay of the Land*. Entering the indoor gallery space, visitors encounter a series of cinematic abstractions of landscape, rendered in the most literal of earth tones: Lucy Raven's *Depositions* series. Made by recreating small-scale dam breaks, floods of water force sedimentary soil through large panels of stretched silk, the residue of which leave ghostly hints of monumental bluffs and coulees on these terribly fragile panes of white.

In an adjacent space Stephen Shore's aerial photos attack the subject from above, commenting on the contradictions present in how we use the land: picturesque farmhouses nestled harmoniously among their surroundings in one image, newly-built trophy homes lording over theirs in the next. The sheer volume of human presence evident from a bird's-eye view simply overwhelms the notion of Montana as pristine.

These and the other exhibitions that make up *The Lay of the Land*—James Castle's staggering body of sketches drawn in woodstove soot on paper, cardboard, unfolded cartons, and every other scrap imaginable; Robbie Wing's assemblage of railroad ties harvested from Tinworks' grounds; Wills Brewer's in-residence ceramic structure—all draw from place and comment on the availability and use of resources. The ways the earth's been poked and prodded by successive civilizations, in the Big Sky and elsewhere, mark both our yearnings and limitations as a species: our desire to live amid beauty while putting it to use, often at a cost.

One of James Castle's found-material sketches from *The Lay of the Land*.
Photo by Eric Heidle.

Tinworks Director Jenny Moore describes Lucy Raven's *Depositions* series. *Photo by Eric Heidle.*

For *Wheatfield's* contribution at least, it's worth noting that checkerboards of farmland and cityscape are nothing new in this town that's home to Montana's land-grant university. Fields of corn and steers and hay have long greeted puzzled freshmen headed for high-rise dorms in the fall. It's the symbolic deliberateness of *Wheatfield*, its context, that lends it power. And while some of that power draws from nostalgia for a time when we lived in closer harmony with nature, this small plot of orderly golden rows would have equally befuddled visitors during most of the time when we did. Imagine a party of Blackfeet riding by, working to make sense of this tidy rectangle where sage and bunch grass should grow. Even William Clark would've scratched his head, shepherding his share of the Corps of Discovery through in a mid-July long past.

In any event, *Wheatfield* has served its term. In early September the crop was harvested, both through internal combustion and a wood-and-steel scythe in a grad student's hands. Milled on site, *Wheatfield's* flour will find its way into bread and pizzas and satisfied bellies. This small plot of space returns to fallow, awaiting its next use in the shadow of inevitable apartment blocks rising across the way. A line of weathered metal mailboxes frames its southeast corner on what was once a country lane at the edge of a formerly little town. The last great age of glaciers didn't reach quite this far, leaving this scant bit of acreage untracked. But who's to say? If the uses we put to the earth don't warm it beyond measure, in a far time to come this patch of little ground may slumber for an age, dreaming deep beneath the Bozeman Ice.

Harvest of Agnes Denes' *Wheatfield—An Inspiration. The seed is in the ground* at Tinworks Art, 2024. *Courtesy Agnes Denes and Leslie Tonkonow Artworks + Projects. Photos by Blair Speed.*

Montana's Natural Palette: Harvesting Artistic Pigments from Nature

By John Sullivan

The vast landscapes of Montana, with its rugged mountains, flowing rivers, and diverse flora, have long served as a muse for artists.

But beyond inspiring the subject matter, this rich natural environment offers the very pigments that bring art to life. From river rocks to native plants, Montana's terrain holds a treasure trove of colors waiting to be unlocked. So whether an artist has a subject of nature or not, nature provides the pigment for many artistic mediums.

Montana River Rocks

One of the most enchanting locations for pigment harvesting are the rivers of Montana. Artists and pigment enthusiasts venture to its banks to gather river rocks, which are later transformed into vibrant hues through a meticulous process. Equipped with geological hammers, these rocks are broken into smaller pieces, ground into fine dust using mortar and pestle, sifted, and mixed with plant-based oils like linseed to produce the final pigment.

Mountain Minerals and Soil

Montana's mountainous regions hold rocks and soil rich in minerals, valuable for creating unique pigments. The rocks, chosen for their softness and ability to leave a residue when rubbed, are processed similarly to river rocks. The soil, abundant in minerals from ancient geological processes, adds depth and warmth to the color palette, connecting the artist even further with the land's history.

Native Plants and Organic Materials

Beyond the solid ground, Montana's native plants offer a vibrant spectrum of colors. Fresh or dried plant matter is simmered to extract dyes, creating what are known as lake pigments. This practice, deeply rooted in history, involves soaking the plant matter overnight, simmering it to release the dye, and straining it through muslin cloth. Just as Native peoples once used berries, bark, and flowers for dyes, modern artists continue this tradition, often expanding it to include food wastes like fruit peels and skins for a sustainable twist.

Historical Significance

Montana's pigment harvesting practices date back to Native tribes who skillfully applied color to their crafts. They used tallow to blend pigments into paints and steeped organic materials for dyes. Montana's abundant natural resources meant that bark, berries, and clay were readily available and essential in creating vibrant works. The clay, in particular, from formations like Lewistown and Kootenai, was an integral part of this artistic tradition, illustrating the deep connection between art and the land it emerges from.

Art and Nature United

In Montana, art and nature are intertwined, with the land providing both inspiration and the very tools needed to create. This symbiotic relationship sees artists immersing themselves in the environment, drawing from its depths not just in a metaphorical sense but in a literal one. The pigments derived from Montana's rocks, soils, and plants serve as a vivid reminder of the beauty and abundance of nature, reminding us that art is a reflection of the world around us.

Whether you're an artist seeking unique hues for your palette or an enthusiast inspired by the harmony of nature and creativity, the land here invites you to explore its natural wonders, uncover its hidden colors, and become part of a timeless artistic tradition.

*Over the Top & The White Whale.**

Moby-Dick Reimagined: ***A Painter's Vision***

Local artist Jared Shear has brought Herman Melville's classic story, Moby-Dick, to life in a captivating series of twenty-four paintings. The 1851 novel is remarkable in its capacity to evoke the exotic and strange life that many men had aboard whaling ships in the South Seas. Melville's layering of sea-faring imagery with complex symbolic meaning continues to provide rich inspiration for artists of all kinds even 170 years after its publication. Jared Shear explores human nature, the whaling industry, and the conflict between man and nature in his fresh take on this timeless tale.

Shear posted a few Moby Dick sketches on social media over two years ago, captivating the attention of Lisa Simon, owner of Radius Gallery in downtown Missoula. Simon urged Shear to expand his ideas into a full-fledged series. The result, exhibited at Radius over the summer, is a stunning collection of paintings that invite viewers to delve into the depths of Melville's story.

Below, Lisa Simon and her former UM colleague Brady Harrison, both literature PhD's, explore the content and symbolism of several paintings in a series of mini essays. Their analyses provide a unique perspective on both Melville's and Shear's artistic triumph.

Appointment with Doom

Interpreted by Lisa Simon

The artist's composition for this painting is brilliant. Ahab, Captain of the Pequod, identifiable by his bone peg leg, stands at the bow of a lowered dingy as it glides towards a frenzy in the water, circled by seagulls. Ahab's stance is meditative and resolute, the water calm. Yet blink again and that circle of white forebodes the tunnel vision that traps Ahab in his dangerous crusade for revenge.

Follow Me

Interpreted by Brady Harrison

Ghastly, monomaniacal Ahab—shaggy, brutal and apparently still—has just delivered his address from the Quarter-Deck and won over the crew, especially the influential harpooners, to pursue the whale that took his leg and, it seems, his sanity. To the first man who spots the great leviathan, Ahab has promised a gold coin and by force of will he commits them to his brutal quest. But as the harpoons suggest, violence awaits.

Heart of Darkness

Interpreted by Brady Harrison

Such an arresting image. It's a heart, for sure—and one so red, the background so dark, even menacing. And to whom does it belong? Is it Ahab's after a lifetime at sea, plying a brutal trade, far from his young wife and child? Is it a monstrous whale-sized heart, its insides as encrusted as its ancient hide? Or is it Ishmael's, the ship's lone survivor, a heart of pain and sorrow and memory?

*Above, Interpreted by Lisa Simon

These two paintings stand-in for hundreds of pages of the hunt, an intense learning period narrating species of whales, whaling culture, as well as introducing us to the characters aboard the Pequod. In his paintings, Jared recreates the strong sense of foreboding by emphasizing the size and stealth of the great white whale compared to the seemingly minuscule ship and the outsized ego of the man who commands it.

Moby-Dick's plot has been summed up as "a man's search for meaning in a world of deceptive appearances and fatal delusions." Has there ever been a more timely story? Studying the painter's choices from canvas to canvas helps us go deeper into the feeling of the novel as well as see what's up for interpretation. Whether you've read the novel, seen Gregory Peck's steely performance in the 1956 film, or have just heard all the pop culture references to this classic tome of American literature, Jared Shear's interpretation will take you on an imaginative adventure.

Visit the Radius Gallery website to take a spin through the entire series.

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From Hope, British Columbia, Brady Harrison has written, edited, or co-edited several books, including *The Term Between: Stories* (winner of the 2023 High Plains Book Award in Short Stories) and *A Journey to Al Ramel: A Novel* (forthcoming), and his articles, essays, poems and stories have appeared in journals and books in several countries. He lives in Missoula, Montana, and has also lived and worked in France and Ireland.

Lisa Simon is a Humanities scholar and arts advocate with a Ph.D. in literature, specializing in Literary Modernism. For 7 years, her 5-minute radio program on the literature of the West, Reflections West, was heard on MTPR and YPR. For her work in literary advocacy, she was designated a "Humanities Hero" by the MT state art council. Lisa and her partner Jason Neal opened Radius Gallery in Missoula, a counter-conventional, mission-driven art gallery that is committed to creating a viable arts economy in Montana.

Jared Shear was born in Missoula, Montana in 1976. He received a degree in Animation from the Art Institute of Seattle in 1997. Shear has exhibited in various gallery and museum shows throughout the northwest, including exhibitions at the LCSC Center for Arts and History, and a solo show at the Missoula Art Museum. His work has also been featured in Artist & Illustrator magazine and Spectrum. Shear lives and works in Thompson Falls, MT with his wife and children.

Arts Learning

Artists in Schools and Communities

By Monica Grable

Ben Simon at Missoula Instrument Shop. *Photo by Monica Grable.*

So many ways to learn, so many kinds of learners! The innate drive to create in some manner, and an inclination toward acquiring knowledge as we grow, are shared desires for most of us. Arts learning in particular offers a means of self-expression that supports personal growth and mental well-being while also building community to combat the current epidemic of isolation experienced across age groups. Throughout Montana professional artists of all disciplines are sharing their knowledge and expertise to the benefit of all arts learners, often supported by organizations leading grant-funded projects.

Artists in Schools and Communities (AISC) grants—included in MAC's funding portfolio for five decades running—provide funds that catalyze learning opportunities for every age and ability of learner, in all kinds of settings and sponsored by a wide range of arts and non-arts organizations. They offer a range of opportunity, from short or long-term hands-on learning experiences to funding transportation requests in support of connecting learners with art and artists. Two separate grant processes are currently available to arts nonprofits: AISC Residencies (offered once yearly) and AISC Experiences which accepts applications three times each year.

The latter, AISC Experiences, is a newer grant process under the AISC umbrella that was first offered during the 2022 fiscal year. This process recognizes the many art learning needs that exist statewide and expands the definition of arts learning to include funding categories not typically included in the experiential-oriented AISC Residencies process. Offering support for launch-point projects such as visits to museums and art centers, virtual and in-person lecture demonstrations or experimentation opportunities with new arts media and methods, the Experiences grant awards also can provide chances to extend learning opportunities beyond an artist residency.

For teens in the Missoula area, a fresh and highly unique arts education organization takes a multidisciplinary approach to arts learning. At the Instrument Shop, located on River Road just off Reserve Street, middle and high school-aged participants are taught skills to achieve the rare experience of building an instrument "from scratch"—not only of their choosing but of their own design. From the guitar and mandolin family of instruments to the more extraordinary challenge of harp or organ-building in collaboration with other learners, participants handle all elements of the design process, encompassing woodworking skills, sound design, surface decoration, physics, and electronics, among others.

Ben Simon, who began learning his craft in a North Carolina wood studio before making the move to Montana, founded the Instrument Shop to provide a hands-on education opportunity with a mission of being "dedicated to empowering teens through the activity of building musical instruments." Students taking part in the program experience a great deal of individualized learning supported by a small teacher-to-student ratio in this after-school setting. To learn more about the Instrument Shop, visit youthinstrumentbuilding.org.

By mid-January, new guidelines will be posted to MAC's Artists in Schools and Communities page, art.mt.gov/aisc, and will include content questions contained in the online application form along with deadlines for the 2026 fiscal year. To discuss your project proposal, contact Monica Grable, Arts Education Director, at (406) 444-6522 or Monica.Grable@mt.gov.

2024 AISC Experiences | August Grants Awarded

Organization Name	Organization City	Project Name	Awarded
Art Mobile of Montana	Dillon	Art Mobile of Montana Travel Money	$2,500.00
Bigger Sky Kids, Inc.	Wolf Point	Teaching digital graphic arts and painting with acrylics	$2,500.00
Billings Symphony Society	Billings	Musical Storytime with the Billings Symphony	$2,500.00
East Side School	Livingston	Expanded Art Exploration to Understand the Past	$2,499.00
Free Verse	Missoula	Free Verse Project	$2,500.00
Great Falls Public Schools Music and Art	Great Falls	Paris Gibson Square 3rd Grade Tour	$2,500.00
Hockaday Museum of Art	Kalispell	Traveling Medicine Show	$2,500.00
Instrument Shop	Missoula	Teens Build a Pipe Organ	$2,200.00
Lincoln Council for the Arts	Lincoln	Supaman - School and Community Performances	$2,500.00
Missoula Community Radio	Missoula	FreeSessions	$2,500.00
Montana Chamber Music Society	Bozeman	Noon Notes Program Expansion (Montana Chamber Music)	$2,500.00
Opera Montana (Formerly Intermountain Opera Association)	Bozeman	Wheels of Harmony 2025 Tour	$2,500.00
Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art	Great Falls	Be your Own Curator	$2,430.00
Queen City Ballet Company	Helena	Queen City Ballet Company's School Outreach Performance of The Nutcracker	$2,500.00
Virginia Vinal Women's Band Festival	Missoula	Virginia Vinal Women's Band Festival	$2,500.00
		Total Requests	**$37,129.00**

Mapping A New Home for Art

By Eric Heidle

LeeAnn Ramey Art settled into its new location at 27 North Tracy Avenue in downtown Bozeman this summer, and owner and painter LeeAnn Ramey is excited for art lovers to check out the new digs. She's also welcoming a strong roster of fellow artists to exhibit their work, and many of them share a common bond—participation in the Montana Artrepreneur Program.

Known as MAP for short, this Montana Arts Council program is an intensive series of sessions offered over four weeks by the and designed to provide working artists with the tools to market their art and build a viable business around it. Including skills such as branding their business and crafting their stories, best practices for social media, working with galleries, budgeting and time management, MAP arms working artists with tools and strategies to succeed. And a stroll through LeeAnn's gallery is vivid proof.

Nine of the twelve artists currently showing at LeeAnn Ramey Art are MAP veterans or current students, among them Beth Aimée, Kallie Audet, Kathy Burk, Carrie French, Andrea Morgan, LeeAnn Ramey, and Kara Fellows Tripp. In addition, the gallery offers studio space for artists, and tenants will be offering a range of classes, including LeeAnn's monthly Sip-N-Paints, oil painting by Kara Tripp, jewelry by Beth Aimée, abstract painting by Carrie French, and screenprinting by Sami Hinckley.

This multi-use approach to putting the gallery's 1100 feet of space to work is another example of innovation fostered by MAP. As LeeAnn explains, "In 2015, I participated in the Montana Artrepreneur Program offered to emerging artists by the Montana Arts Council. The program teaches artists how to have a sustainable business in art. I learned so much, met many now life-long artist friends, and highly recommend MAP to all emerging artists."

Being nimble in problem-solving is a critical tool to succeeding at a career in art. In the nearly decade-long span since graduating from the program, LeeAnn Ramey has proven that it's possible to build a creative life for oneself, one's fellow artists, and the next generation. MAP helped give LeeAnn the tools to build that life, and in turn she's helped put fellow artists on the map—right on South Tracy. When you get the chance, stop in and see for yourself.

leeannrameyart.com

Poetry Out Loud 2024-25

This year marks a milestone as both the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and the Montana Arts Council commemorate the 20th year of this transformative arts education program. Since its inception, Montana Poetry Out Loud has engaged thousands of high school students across the state in the artful recitation of works by noted poets, past and present. In the words of NEA Chair Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD., "Poetry Out Loud fosters community and connection by uniting students, educators, and organizations through the shared experience of celebrating poetry."

Helping administer this year's program is newly-hired POL Outreach Coordinator Mikey Gray. Fresh off her 4th summer tour with Montana Shakespeare in the Parks, Mikey is ready to share her love of the spoken word with Montana's students and we're thrilled to have her join the MAC staff part-time. Read on for a conversation with MAC's newest staff member.

MAC: What about being involved with Poetry Out Loud captured your imagination and attention?

MG: When this opportunity popped up one morning, I thought this is the most beautiful connection of what I personally desire and what professionally feels like a way to engage my background; it's something I've always wanted to do: work with people who are younger than me and inspire younger people, making sure that I'm fostering the next generation of Montanans. Because I wasn't actually introduced to the program as a high school student, I feel that much more dedication to including as many schools as possible in this year's program.

MAC: How is reciting from the stage, doing theater, tied to Poetry Out Loud? What might you want to impart to students as they are engaged with the program this year?

MG: It's sort of fundamentally why I think I've continued this challenging career of acting: I believe that what we share, what stories we tell, what words we speak in both art and in our personal daily lives, is so important; the what is so important. But the how, how we recite, how we actually express words and thoughts and emotion is equally important to what we are saying—that is maybe most obvious in Shakespeare. Anyone can pick up a sonnet and read 'shall I compare thee to a summer's day?' But how you read those

Poetry Out Loud Outreach Coordinator Mikey Gray.

words, how you actually relay that emotion, is the art of it and I do feel with poems in particular, the artistic choices that writers make, is such a gift to any artist or anyone picking up and reading a poem.

MAC: What could you say about a student's opportunity to find their voice through the recitation of words that are not theirs?

MG: No one goes to a soccer game without having extensive practice. No one performs on any field, on any stage without the dedication and the work it takes to get to a place of performance. I'm so excited that this program emphasizes that work and that classroom experience; if you can get to a place where you actually enjoy the play, the freedom to grow and expand and try, that is the good place. You cannot get there without hours and hours of dedication. But I think it's really the next step, the higher spiritual place you can enter. It's trusting in the space that your teachers and peers have created, trusting in yourself that you've done that work and that anything can happen.

Recruitment efforts are currently underway—and will continue into November—to engage educators and students in this year's POL program. Classroom competitions will begin in December, followed by schoolwide competitions in January. From there, each school is invited to advance 3 students to one of 5 or 6 regional competitions that will identify 18 students as competitors in the State Finals in Helena on March 8. **To learn more about Montana's Poetry Out Loud program, visit art.mt.gov/pol or contact Mikey Gray at poetryoutloud@mt.gov.**

Fall Calendar 2024

Anaconda						
Copper Village Museum & Art Center	Art	Oktoberfest	October 5	10:00 AM	discoveranaconda.com	Free
Billings						
Babcock Theatre	Music	Warren Miller's 75	October 23	7:00 PM	warrenmiller.com	$20
Alberta Bair Theater	Music	Black Violin	October 4	7:30 PM	albertabairtheater.org	$20
	Misc.	Big Sky Comedy Festival	October 5	7:30 PM		$20
	Music	Home Free - Crazy(er) Life Tour	October 6	6:00 PM		$20
	Misc.	Nick Swardson Toilet Head Tour	October 10	8:00 PM		$20
	Music	One Night in Memphis	October 12	7:30 PM		$20
	Theatre	World Ballet Company: Swan Lake	October 19	2:30 PM & 7:00 PM		$20
	Music	Billings Symphony Presents Beethoven 5	October 26	7:30 PM		$20
	Music	The Villalobos Brothers	November 2	7:30 PM		$20+
	Music	Come From Away	November 4	8:00 PM		$80+
	Music	Pink Floyd's "The Dark Side of the Moon"	November 8	8:00 PM		$22+
	Music Theatre	Hadestown	November 20	7:30 PM		$80+
	Music Theatre	Billings Symphony Presents: The Nutcracker Ballet	Nov 30 & Dec 1	2:00 PM & 7:00 PM		$20+
	Music Theatre	Disney Jr. Live on Tour: Let's Play	December 7	4:00 PM		$32+
	Music	The Fab Four: USA Meets the Beatles!	December 8	6:00 PM		$22+
	Music	Phat Cat Swinger - A Not So Silent Night Tour	December 14	7:30 PM		$38+
	Music Theatre	Billings Symphony Presents Home for the Holidays	December 21	7:30 PM		$20+
First Interstate Arena at MetraPark	Music	Judas Priest	October 3	7:30 PM	metrapark.com	$54+
	Misc.	Rescued and Reclaimed	October 4-5	Daily		$5
	Misc.	Theo Von: Return of the Rat	October 25	8:00 PM		TBA
	Art & Music	Holiday Food & Gift Festival	November 9 & 10	9:00 AM		$3+
	Music	Bippi: Join the Band Tour	November 19	7:00 PM		$32.45+
Kirks Grocery	Art	Ellen Ornitz & Candace Forrette Opening Reception	October 4	5:00 PM	kirksgrocery.com	Free
	Art	First Day of Kirk's Small Works: Intrinsic Exhibition	November 29	5:00 PM	kirksgrocery.com	Free
	Art	Kirk's Small Works: Intrinsic Opening Reception	December 6	5:00 PM	kirksgrocery.com	Free
Yellowstone Art Museum	Art	Mark Earnhart & Jodi Lightner: Suspended Intervals	Aug 2024 - Jan 2025	Daily	artmuseum.org	$6+
	Art	Man and Machine	Jun 2024 - Jul 2025	Daily		$6+
	Art	I Remember Project: Commissioned Artwork by Elizabeth Stone	October 2024	Daily		$6+
NOVA Center for the Performing Arts	Theatre	Jake's Women	October 11-13, 18-20	7:00 PM & 2:00 PM	novabillings.org	$12+
	Theatre	Festival One Acts	November 1-3, 8-10	7:00 PM & 2:00 PM		$22+
	Theatre	A Christmas Carol	December 6-8, 13-15, 20-22	7:00 PM & 2:00 PM		$22+
Downtown Billings	Art	Art Walk Downtown Billings	Oct 4 & Dec 6	5:00 PM	artwalkbillings.com	Free
The Pub Station Ballroom	Music	Highly Suspect	October 3	8:00 PM	thepubstation.com	$40+
	Misc.	Christopher Titus	October 4	8:00 PM		$39.50+
	Music	Corb Lund	October 5	8:00 PM		$34
	Music	Conner Smith	October 9	8:00 PM		$25+
	Music	Queensryche: The Origins Tour	October 28	7:00 PM		$35
	Music	Baby Jake	October 29	8:00 PM		$18
	Music	The Menzingers	October 31	8:00 PM		$30
	Music	Chase Matthew	November 7	8:00 PM		$25
	Music	The Brothers Comatose	November 12	8:00 PM		$25
	Misc.	Jamie Lissow	November 26	8:00 PM		$39.50
Crooked Line Studio	Art	After School Art	October 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30	2:45 PM	crookedlinestudio.com	$30
	Art	Weird Watercolor with Brittney Hernandez	October 3 & 10	1:00 PM		$37.50+
	Art	Portrait Painting with Carolyn Thayer	October 3	6:00 PM		$225
	Art	Open Art	October 4	10:00 AM		$8
	Art	Friday Painters with Carolyn Thayer	October 4	1:00 PM		$225
	Art	Open Oil	October 4	1:00 PM		$10
	Art	Family Heirloom Recipes with Elizabeth Waddington	October 5	3:00 PM		$35
	Art	Painting 101 with Carolyn Thayer	October 7	6:00 PM		$225
	Art	Thread Sketching with Elizabeth Waddington	October 9 &10	6:00 PM		$40
	Art	15 Minute Art with Jennifer Plumley	October 12 & 26	10:00 AM		$35
	Art	Aspen Grove with Teresa Brown	October 12	10:00 AM		$55
	Art	No Time Art Journaling with Katherine Jore	October 12	2:00 PM		$40
	Art	Level Up Your Art Journal with Katherine Jore	October 15 & 22	6:00 PM		$70
	Art	Gouache Basics with Jennifer Plumley	October 17, 24 & 31	1:00 PM		$150
	Art	Sketchbook Club with John Kennedy	October 19	10:00 AM		TBA
	Art	Skygazing with Brittney Hernandez	October 19	2:00 PM		$45

Big Sky

The Waypoint	Art	Warren Miller's 75	November 14-16	7:00 PM	thebigskywaypoint.com	$20
Art Council Studio at BASE	Art	Intermediate Pottery	Oct 15, 22 , 29, Nov 5, 12 & 19	6:00 PM	bigskyarts.org	$20
Art Council Studio at BASE	Art	All Levels Pottery - 5 weeks	October 2, 9, 16 & 23	6:00 PM	bigskyarts.org	$20
	Art	Elementary School ARTventure Class	Oct 3, 17, 24 , 31, Nov 14, 21, Dec 5 12	4:00 PM		$20
	Art	All Levels Pottery - 10 weeks	Oct 3, 10, 17, 24, 31, Nov 7 & 14	10:00 AM		$20
	Art	Open Pottery Studio Thursdays	Oct 3, 17, 24, 31, Nov 14, 21 & Dec 6	6:00 PM		$20
	Art	Watercolor Workship with Loren Kovich	October 4 & 5	9:00 AM		$20
	Art	Open Pottery Studio Sundays	Oct 6, 13, 20, 27, Nov 3, 17, 24, Dec 1, 8 & 15	6:00 PM		$20
	Art	All Levels Pottery - 10 weeks	Oct 7, 14, 21, 28, Nov 4, 11 & 18	12:00 PM		$20
	Art	Beginner Stained Glass design	Oct 14, 21, 28, Nov 4 & 11	6:00 PM		$20
	Art	Middle School ARTventure Class	Oct 14, 21, 28, Nov 4, 11, 18, 25, Dec 2, 9 & 16	4:00 PM		$20
	Art	Community Art Class: Upcycled Collaging Class	November 13	6:00 PM		$20
	Art	Community Art Class: Acrylic Painting; Elf/Fairy/Gnome Yourself	December 4	6:00 PM		$20
	Art	Community Art Class: Resin Ornaments/Wall Hangings	December 11	6:00 PM		$20
	Art	Community Art Class: Mixed Media Clay and Collage Ornaments	December 18	6:00 PM		$20

Big Timber

Two Rivers Gallery	Music	Dover Quartet	October 30	7:00 PM	montanachambermusic.org	$10+

Bozeman

Bozeman Public Library	Literary	Symphony Storytime	Oct 9 & Nov 9	10:15 AM	bozemansymphony.org	Free
Willson Auditorium	Music	The Rhythms of Beethoven, Rossina and Akiho	October 12 & 13	7:30 PM & 2:30 PM		$27+
	Music	Bozeman Symphony Holiday Spectacular	December 13-15	7:30 PM & 2:30 PM		$28+
Holy Rosary Catholic Church	Music	Mozart's Requiem	November 14-16	7:30 PM & 2:00 PM		$60+
The Emerson	Misc.	Katie Goodman's Broad Comedy	November 14 , 15 & 16	8:00 PM	theemerson.org	$35+
The Ellen Theatre	Film	Hundreds of Beavers	October 4	7:30 PM	theellen.my.salesforce-sites.com	$11.50+
	Misc.	Christopher Titus	October 5	8:00 PM		$39+
	Film	Ice Age	October 6	2:00 PM		$8.50
	Film	Warren Miller's 75	October 26	4:00 PM & 7:00 PM		$20
	Music	Pecha Kucha 44	October 6 & 7	6:40 PM		$10+
Brick Breeden Fieldhouse	Art & Music	Bozeman Fall Made Fair	October 18-19	Daily	handmademontana.com	$5+
Downtown Bozeman	Art	Winter Art Walk	December 13	6:00 PM	downtownbozeman.org	Free
Old Main Gallery	Music	Dover Quartet	October 31	6:30 PM	montanachambermusic.org	$10+
Reynolds Recital Hall, MSU	Music	Dover Quartet	November 1	7:30 PM		$10+
Bozeman Art Museum	Art	BAM 89'ers	October 18	5:00 PM	bozemanartmuseum.org	Free
	Art	Miniature Art Auction	November 15	5:30 PM		Free'
The Elm	Music	Evan Honer	October 3	7:00 PM	logjampresents.com	$22+
	Music	Highly Suspect	October 4	8:00 PM		$39+
	Music	BoomBox	October 5	8:00 PM		$28+
	Music	Josh Wolf	October 10	8:00 PM		$34+
	Music	AlleyCVT	October 17	8:00 PM		$26+
	Music	Blackberry Smoke	October 19	8:00 PM		$37+
	Music	Ziggy Stardust	October 20	8:00 PM		$45+
	Music	Benjamin Tod & Lost Dog Street Band	October 21	7:00 PM		$25+
	Music	Corb Lind	October 31	8:00 PM		$30+
	Music	Peekaboo	November 7	8:00 PM		$30+
	Music	The Last Revel	November 8	8:00 PM		$22+
	Music	ZZ Ward	November 12	8:00 PM		$27+
	Music	The Brothers Comatose	November 13	8:00 PM		$20+
	Music	Funxgiving	November 23	8:00 PM		$27+
	Misc.	Jamie Lissow	November 25	7:00 PM		$30+
The Rialto	Music	Moon Hooch	October 1	7:00 PM		$22+
	Music	Wretches & Kings	October 5	8:00 PM		$20+
	Music	Jazz Cabbage	October 11	8:00 PM		Free
	Music	Ryan Chrys & The Rough Cuts	October 18	8:00 PM		$10+
	Music	Not.Greenday	November 2	8:00 PM		$22+
	Music	Willie Watson	Novemer 12	8:00 PM		$22+
	Music	Armchair Boogie	Novemer 16	8:00 PM		$12+
Tinworks Art	Art	Agnes Denes Wheatfield	Jun 15-Oct 19	Daily	tinworksart.org	Free
	Art	Lucy Raven	Jun 15-Oct 19	Daily		Free
	Art	James Castle	Jun 15-Oct 19	Daily		Free
	Art	Robbie Wing	Jun 15-Oct 19	Daily		Free
	Art	Stephen Shore	Jun 15-Oct 19	Daily		Free

Art Art & Music Cultural Dance Film Literary Misc. Music Theatre

Tinworks Art		Wills Brewer	Sept 1-Oct 19	Daily		Free
Live from the Divide		Mike Murray Duo	October 4	8:00 PM	livefromthedivide.com	$35+
		Tylor & The Train Robbers	October 5	8:00 PM		$45+
		Cole Chaney	October 9	8:00 PM		$45+
		Jason Eady	October 23	8:00 PM		$50+
		BLKBOK	October 24	8:00 PM	livefromthedivide.com	$40+
Butte						
The Mother Lode Theatre		Gaelic Storm	October 26	7:00 PM	buttearts.org	$15+
		The Butte Symphony Series: Let's Celebrate - Opening Night!	November 2	7:30 PM		$15+
		Boy Meets Girl	November 14	7:00 PM		$25+
		The Butte Symphony Series: Our Butte Holiday!	December 14	7:30 PM		$15+
The Covellite Theatre		Drink and Draw with Kari Workman: Bones & Taxidermy	October 2	7:00 PM	covellitepresents.org	Free
		Ben Larson & The Grown Ass Men	October 5	7:00 PM		$15/$20
		Chruch of Cash	October 11	7:00 PM		$15/$20
		A Night of Patsy Cline	Oct 12th	7:00 PM		$17/$24
		Meadbodies	October 15	7:00 PM		$17/$22
		Dizzy Wright	October 18	8:00 PM		$30/$40
		Rock the Pit - Year 4	October 19th	Half Day		$10-$45
		Rave from the Grave: 2 Nights! 2 Stages!	Oct 25th-26th	Both Nights		$10-$20
		Drink and Draw with Kari Workman: Buzzed Pictionary	Nov 6	7:00 PM		Free
		Covellite International Film Preview Festival	Nov 9th	All Day		free
		Mabel's Rage on Drinksgiving	Nov 27th	7:00 PM		free
		Drink and Draw with Kari Workman: Portrait Workshop	December 4	7:00 PM		Free
		All Ages Open Mic	Every Tuesday	7-11 PM		free
		Wednesday Night Movies on the Big Screen	Every Wednesday	7:30 PM		free
		New Featured Monthly Artist on Display in the Uptown Lounge	Monthly			free
Dillon						
UM-Western Beier Auditorium		Boyd Meets Girl	November 13	7:30 PM	facebook.com/dillonconcert	$6+
Eureka						
Lincoln County High School		Deep Mountain Concert	October 4	7:00 PM	sunburstarts.org	TBA
		Jazz Legacy Concert	November 2	7:00 PM		TBA
Great Falls						
The Historic Mansfield Theater		How Sweet It Is	October 10	7:30 PM	greatfallsmt.net	TBA
		One Night in Memphis	October 15	7:30 PM		$31+
		World Ballet Company: Swan Lake	October 18	7:30 PM		$38.25+
		Jason Coleman	November 7	7:00 PM		$15+
		Nutcracker!	November 22	7:00 PM		$26+
Paris Gibson Square Museum of Art		Art of Christmas Holiday Open House & Artist Market	December 6 & 7	Daily	the-square.org	TBA
Montana Expo Park		Harvest Howl	November 8	5:30 PM	harvesthowl.com	$450+
The Newberry		Wretches & Kings, A Tribute to Linkin Park	October 4	7:30 PM	thenewberrymt.com	$22.50+
		Wine & Whiskey Tasting in the Tropics	October 5	6:00 PM		$80
		Conner Smith	October 8	7:30 PM		$25.20+
		Bowling for Soup	October 13	7:30 PM		$40.50+
		Brad Tursi	October 25	7:30 PM		$31.50+
		Rittz	October 31	7:30 PM		TBA
		Corb Lund	November 1	7:30 PM		$32.40+
		Paula Poundstone	Novemer 9	9:00 PM		$39.60+
		EMO Night Brooklyn	November 15	9:00 PM		$24.30+
		Kaitlin Butts: Roadrunner! Tour	November 16	7:30 PM		$22.50+
		Chad & JT	November 22	7:00 PM		$31.50+
Hamilton						
Ravalli County Museum & Historical Society		McIntosh Apple Day Festival	October 5	9:00 AM	ravallimuseum.org	$31.50+
		Liquid Apple Night	October 5	5:00 PM		$35
		Victorian Christmas	December 11	6:30 PM		Free
Hamilton Performing Arts Center		Black Violin	October 5	8:00 PM	bitterrootperformingarts.org	$143
		Gaelic Storm	October 25	8:00 PM		$45+
		James McMurtry	November 16	8:00 PM		$45+
Havre						
MSUN/MAT Theatre		An Enemy of the People	October 11-12, 17-19 & 24-26	7:30 PM	mtactors.com	$5+
		The Rocky Horror Picture Show	Novemer 1 & 2	7:30 PM		$5+
		Women of Rock	November 8 & 9	7:30 PM		$5+
		The Sound of Music	December 6-7, 12-14 & 19-21	7:30 PM		$5+
Havre Library		Books & Babies	Wednesdays	10:15 AM	havrehilllibrary.org	$5+

Havre Library		Crafternoon	Wednesdays	3:30 PM		$5+
		Storytime	Wednesdays & Fridays	10:30 AM		$5+
		Yarn Circle	Fridays	4:00 PM		$5+
Helena						
Frances Senska Center for Education		Artist Amplified; Louise Ogemahgeshig Fischer	October 17	6:30 PM	archiebray.org	$5+
Archie Bray Foundation		Holiday Show	Nov 7-Dec 23	Daily		Free
		Pushing Pots	Sept 23-Dec 2	6:00 PM - 9:00 PM		$385
		Applying your Voice	Sept 25-Dec 4	9:30 AM - 12:30 PM		$385
		Clay and Concept	Sept 25-Dec 4	6:00 PM - 9:00 PM		$385
		Surface Level	Sept 28 -Dec 7	2:00 PM - 5:00 PM		$385
Downtown Helena		Fall Art Walk	November 8	4:00 PM		Free
The Myrna Loy		Nano Stern	October 3	7:30 PM	themyrnaloy.com	$24
		The Invisible Shield	Oct 8 & Nov 12	6:30 PM		Free
		Brew & View: This is Spinal Tap	October 10	8:00 PM	themyrnaloy.com	$12+
		Cinema to Sound	October 17	7:30 PM		$24
		Warren Miller's 75	October 24	7:30 PM		$20
		Penny Price Swanson: Pots, Prints and a bit of Whimsy	Sept 5-Oct 28	Daily		Free
		Bill Bowers	November 7	7:30 PM		$15+
		Alex Cuba	November 14	7:30 PM		$30
		Meet Me in St. Lewis: Holiday Classic	December 3	7:00 PM		$10
		Brew & View: Christmas Vacation	December 4-5	8:00 PM		$12+
		A Christmas Story	December 6	7:00 PM		$7+
		A Hard Hugs Christmas	December 12	7:30 PM		$25
Helena Fairgrounds		Helena Holiday Made Fair	December 6 & 7	Daily	handmademontana.com	Free
Helena Civic Center		One Night in Memphis	October 13	7:30 PM	helenamt.gov/Community	$45+
		Autumn Art & Craft Show	October 26	Daily		Free
		Holiday Markets	November 2	Daily		Free
		Led Zeppelin's "IV"	November 6	8:00 PM		$30+
The Holter Musuem of Art		Len Davis: A Thousand Words	Sept 7-Nov 3	Daily	holtermuseum.org	Free
		A Brush with Expression	Sept 27-Oct 28	Daily		Free
		Plants and Their Place in the Rocky Mountain Region	Sept 27-Nov 3	Daily		Free
		Emily McIlroy: All is a Creative Circle	Oct 4-Dec 24	Daily		Free
Grandstreet Theatre		A New Sherlock Holmes Adventure	October 4-27	7:30 PM & 2:30 PM	grandstreettheatre.com	$23+
		Alice in Wonderland Jr.	December 5-15	7:30 PM & 2:30 PM		$15
		A Christmas Carol	December 13-17	7:30 PM & 2:30 PM		$23+
Lewis & Clark Brewing Company		Tylor & The Train Robbers	October 3	8:00 PM	thepubstation.com	$15
		Corb Lund	October 4	8:00 PM		$30
		Kaitlin Butts: Roadrunner! Tour	November 17	8:00 PM		$20
Lewis and Clark Library		Big Read Kickoff Party	October 4	5:00 PM	lclibrary.libcal.com	Free
		Reading Circle Book Group	October 25	3:00 PM		Free
		Middle Grade Book Group	October 10	4:00 PM		Free
Kalispell						
Wachholz College Center		Home Free: Crazy(er) Life Tour	October 5	7:30 PM	wachholzcollegecenter.org	Free
		Black Violin	October 6	7:00 PM		$36+
		Glacier Symphony Fantastique featuring Tommy Mesa	October 12 & 13	7:30 PM & 3:00 PM		$96+
		Changemaker Speaker: Jamie Metzl	October 15	7:30 PM		$18+
		David Bowie: Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars	October 18	7:30 PM		$38+
		One Night in Memphis	October 19	7:30 PM		$48+
		Gaelic Storm	October 24	7:30 PM		$40+
		Montana's Got Talent	October 26	7:00 PM		$30+
		An Evening with Brad Tursi of Old Dominion	October 27	7:30 PM		$39+
		The Frontmen	October 29	7:30 PM		$39+
		Glacier Symphony Chorale: With Joy Together	November 2	7:30 PM		$102+
		Glacier Sympyhony: Finlandia!	November 16 & 17	7:30 PM & 3:00 PM		$96+
		Mannheim Steamroller Christmas	November 20	7:30 PM		$95+
		Della Mae	November 24	7:00 PM		$23.50
		Rudolf the Red-Nosed Reindeer: The Musical	December 5	7:00 PM		$49+
		Glacier Symphony: Handel's Messiah	December 7 & 8	7:30 PM & 3:00 PM		$99+
		VOCTAVE: It Feels Like Christmas	December 11	7:00 PM		$40+
		Glacier Symphony: The Nutcracker with San Diego Ballet Company	December 14 & 15	1 PM, 2 PM, 7 PM		$72+
Hockaday Museum of Art		Artist Wilderness Connection Celebrates 20 Years	Jun 28-Oct 26	Daily	hockadaymuseum.com	$4+
		Silver Linings: Clouds by Michelle Osman	Sept 7-Dec 14	Daily		$4+

Livingston

Shane Lalani Center for the Arts		Movement for the Actor: K-5th	October 7-28	4:00 PM	theshanecenter.org	$4+
		Oliver	Oct 18-Nov 10	8:00 PM		$10+
		Adult Stage Combat Workshop	October 5 & 12	10:00 AM		$90
		Devised Theatre Initiative: Community Performance	November 22-24	8:00 PM		$10+
		Holiday Vaudeville 2024	December 13-22	8:00 PM & 3:00 PM		$10+

Miles City

Waterworks Musuem		Quilted Wonders	Oct 4-Nov 14	Daily	wtrworks.org	$10+
		Annual Holiday Exhibition	Nov 22-Dec 27	Daily		Free

Missoula

Missoula Art Museum		Art In The Moment: Mary Ann Bonjorni, Session 1	October 7	1:30 PM	missoulaartmuseum.org	Free
		Teen Art Project	Oct 10-Dec 12	3:00 PM		Free
		Art In The Moment: Mary Ann Bonjorni, Session 2	October 21	1:30 PM		Free
		Art In The Moment: Dr. Jane Ash Poitras, Session 1	November 4	1:30 PM		Free
Missoula Art Museum		After School Art	Nov 5-Dec 10	3:45 PM		Free
		Art In The Moment: Dr. Jane Ash Poitras, Session 2	November 18	1:30 PM		$63+
Radius Gallery		Carol Gouthro & Patti Warashina: DUET	Sept 13-Oct 31	Daily	radiusgallery.com	Free
		New works by Hadley Ferguson	October 17-23	Daiy		Free
		11th Annual Holiday Show	Nov 1-Dec 30	Daiy		Free
The Top Hat		Brute Finesse	October 4	10:15 PM	logjampresents.com	Free
		The Local Honeys	October 5	10:15 PM		Free
		Stilgone	October 11	10:15 PM		Free
		Lark	October 12	10:15 PM		Free
		Dammit Lauren!	October 18	10:15 PM		Free
		Ryan Chrys & The Rough Cuts	October 19	10:15 PM		Free
		SpunJ	October 26	10:15 PM		Free
		Halloween Dance Party	October 31	10:15 PM		Free
		Latin Night	November 1	10:15 PM		Free
		Shark Buffalo	November 2	10:15 PM		Free
		Pesky Varmints	November 9	10:15 PM		Free
		Willie Watson	November 11	9:00 PM		Free
		Armchair Boogie	November 15	10:15 PM		$22+
		Jazz Cabbage	November 16	10:15 PM		Free
		Bacon & Egg with Sasha Bell Band	November 22	10:15 PM		Free
		Badger Hound	November 23	10:15 PM		Free
		Charlie Apple	December 6	10:15 PM		Free
The Wilma		Red NOT Chili Peppers	October 3	8:00 PM		Free
		Boombox	October 4	8:00 PM		$25+
		Highly Suspect	October 5	8:00 PM		$25+
		Church of Cash	October 12	8:00 PM		$37+
		AlleyCVT	October 18	8:00 PM		$22+
		Ziggy Stardust	October 19	8:00 PM		$23+
		Blackberry Smoke	October 20	8:00 PM		$30+
		Benjamin Tod & Lost Dog Street Band	October 22	7:00 PM		$32+
		Paul Cauthen	October 28	8:00 PM		$25+
		Queensryche	October 29	7:00 PM		$40+
		The Last Revel	November 9	8:00 PM		$37+
		ZZ Ward	November 13	8:00 PM		$22+
		The Brothers Comatose	November 14	8:00 PM		$25+
		Funxgiving	November 22	8:00 PM		$20+
		Jamie Lissow	November 24	7:00 PM		$25+
		David Cross	December 7	6:30 PM & 9:30 PM		$30+
		Of The Trees	December 14	8:00 PM		$45+
Missoula Community Theatre		Little Shop of Horrors	October 10-27	2:00, 6:30 & 7:30 PM	mctinc.org	$27+
		A Christmas Story	December 5-22	2:00, 6:30 & 7:30 PM		$25+
George & Jane Dennison Theatre		Nick Swardson	October 11	7:30 PM	umt.edu	$25+
		World Ballet Company: Swan Lake	October 17	7:30 PM & 3:00 PM		$139+
		Warren Miller's 75	October 25	7:30 PM	warrenmiller.com	$129+
		Nutcracker Magical Christmas Ballet	November 24	7:30 PM & 3:00 PM	umt.edu	$20
Adams Center University of		Missoula Holiday Made Fair	December 15	Daily	handmademontana.com	$69+
Missoula Children's Theatre		A Midsummer Night's Dream	October 5 & 6	5:00 PM & 7:00 PM	mctinc.org	Free
		Alice in Wonderland	October 2	5:00 PM		$12+

Missoula Children's Theatre		Disney's Finding Nemo KIDS	November 1, 2, 8 & 9	7:00 PM		Free
Missoula Public Library		Middle School Writers Group	Wednesdays	3:30 PM	missoulapubliclibrary.org	$17
		Young Adult Writers Group	Fridays	3:30 PM		Free
		Watercolor Painting	Fridays	12:00 PM		Free
Zootown Arts Community Center		Mask Making	October 1-22	6:00 PM	showroom.zootownarts.org	Free
		Homeschool Art Camp	October 2-23 & Oct 30-Nov 20	9:00 AM		$175
		Homeschool Art Club	Oct 4-25, Nov 1-22 &Dec 6-20	9:00 AM		$175
		3D Building Bonanza	Oct 15-Nov 19	4:00 PM		$175
		Painting	Oct 15-Nov 19	4:00 PM		$145
		DIY Watercolor Painting Lino Cut Prints	Oct 15-Nov 12	5:30 PM		$175
Laura Grace Barrett Print Shop		Sewing Club	Oct 16-Nov 20	4:00 PM		$255
		Art Activity Day	October 17-18	9:00 AM		$175
Zootown Arts Community Center		Comics Class	Oct 21-Nov 18	4:00 PM		$85
		Distinguished Artist Club: Painting Edition	Oct 22-Nov 12	1:00 PM		$175
		Beginnign Ukulele	Oct 22-Nov 19	5:30 PM		$40+
		Carving Soapstone	Oct 24-Nov 21	3:00 PM		$215
Laura Grace Barrett Print Shop		Youth Printmaking: Stamps & Screens	Oct 24-Nov 21	3:00 PM		$175
Zootown Arts Community Center		One Day Body Painting Workshop for Adults	October 26	10:00 AM	showroom.zootownarts.org	$165
		Retro Rockers: Rock Camp for Adults	Oct 28-Dec 2	5:30 PM		$120
Missoula Arts Musuem		BT Livermore: Oh, The Wait Of It All	Sept 6-Jan 11, 2025	Daily	missoulaartmuseum.org	$255
		Jonathan Marquis: Something To Hold: The Glacier Drawing Project	Sept 3-Dec 7	Daily		Donation
		Mary Ann Bonjorni: Head and Heart	Aug 2-Dec 14	Daily		Donation
		Art in the Moment: Mary Ann Bonjorni, Session 1	October 7	1:30 PM		Donation
		Teen Art Project	October 10	3:00 PM		Free
		Art in the Moment: Mary Ann Bonjorni, Session 2	October 21	1:30 PM		Free
		Art In the Moment: Dr. Jane Ash Poitras, Session 1	November 4	1:30 PM		Free
		After School Art Adventure Series 2: Winter	Nov 5-Dec 10	3:45 PM		Free
		Art In The Moment: Dr. Jane Ash Poitras, Session 2	November 18	1:30 PM		$63+
Mansfield Library Mall		Dance On Location	October 5	5:30 PM	umt.edu/theatre-dance	Free
University of Montana Theatre		Into The Woods	October 17-20 & 24-27	7:30 PM & 2:00 PM		$10
Masquer Theatre		Silent Sky	November 14-17 & 21-24	7:30 PM & 2:00 PM		$22+
University of Montana Theatre		Dance Underground	December 5-7	7:30 PM & 2:00 PM		$22+
		SOR and Dolce Canto	November 11	4:00 PM	sormt.org	$10
Missoula Senior Center		Bingo! A night of theatre, dance and prizes	November 15-17 & 22-24	7:30 PM & 2:00 PM	montanarep.com	$12+
Red Lodge						
Roosevelt Center		Warren Miller's 75	November 29	7:00 PM	warrenmiller.com	$12+
Ronan						
Polson High School		Duende Libre	November 8	7:00 PM	missionvalleylive.com	$15
Seeley Lake						
Seeley Swan High School		The Rebecca Folsom Band	October 6	3:00 PM	alpineartisans.org	TBA
Seeley & Swan Valley						
Various Galleries		Tour of the Arts	October 12 & 13	Daily	alpineartisans.org	Free
Stevensville						
Bitteroot Valley		Artists Along the Bitterroot	October 18-20	Daily	artistsalongthebitterroot.com	Free
Stevensville Playhouse		Anne of Green Gables	October 11-27	7:30 PM & 2:00 PM	stevensvilleplayhouse.org	$12+
		Tuck Everlasting	December 6-15	7:30 PM & 2:00 PM		$12+
Victor						
Mary Stuart Rogers Performing Arts Center		Missoula Symphony Holiday Concert	December 14	2:00 PM & 4:30 PM	bitterrootperformingarts.org	$12+
Whitefish						
The O'Shaughnessy Center		Warren Miller's 75	November 15-16	7:00 PM	warrenmiller.com	$12+
Whitefish Depot Park		Great Northwest Oktoberfest	Sept 26-28 & Oct 3-5	Daily	whitefishoktoberfest.com	$10
Whitefish Performing Arts		The Wizard of OZ - Youh Addition	October 19 & 20	2:00, 6:00 & 7:00 PM	atpwhitefish.org	$10+
		Yuletide Affair 21	December 20-22	7:00 PM		$44+
Downtown Whitefish		Whitefish Gallery Nights	October 3	5:00 PM	whitefishgallerynights.org	Free
Whitefish Theatre Co		ALMOST, MAINE	October 18-20, 24-26	7:30 PM & 4:00 PM	whitefishtheatreco.org	$10+
		Montreal Guitare Trio	November 1	7:30 PM		$20+
		Black Curtain: PROOF	November 9 & 10	7:30 PM		$10+
		GAMES A FOOT	December 6-8, 12-15	7:30 PM & 4:00 PM		$10+

State of the ARTS

MONTANA ARTS COUNCIL

Fall 2024

October
November
December

FEATURING

2 From the Director
3-4 Announcements & In Memory

PERFORMING ARTS SECTION
5 Film
6 Theater / Dance
7 Music

LITERARY ARTS SECTION
8 Literary News
10 Book Reviews

NATIVE ARTS SECTION
14 Art News

SPECIAL SECTION
15-18 Governor's Arts Award Honorees

VISUAL ARTS SECTION
19 Art News

ARTS LEARNING SECTION
24 Art News

FALL ARTS CALENDAR
26 Montana Fall Events

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an agency of state government

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